

Is Buddhism a Religion: Why it Matters?

Dipobhasadhamma

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The dhamma that I teach can be understood only by those who know how to think."

~Gautama Buddha~

"Buddhism has no room for intellectual sissies. It offers no salvation by faith; only by fearless, realistic reasoning and effort." ~Ven. Sanathavihari~

PREFACE to Third Edition



For some 35 years, I intensely participated in various faith-based religions. After a long hiatus, I finally abandoned this participation. I began seriously investigating Buddhism as a religion in 2007. One defining experience remained with me during prior involvement with faith-based religions. It was easy for me to identify with the Buddha because I understood his dissatisfaction with the responses I received to my own fundamental inquiries concerning the causes of suffering, aging, sickness, and death. As with many others, I assumed that religion was the sole means of addressing these queries. However, my frustration led me to the conclusion that this was not the case.

As I approach my seventieth year in this world, I reflect back on 2014 when I began my journey on the Dhamma Path by stepping into a Zen monastery intent on becoming a monk. This was a formidable undertaking for me, not only because of my age, but also due to my more than thirty-five years of affiliation with faith-based religions, which, over time, had instilled in me a profound skepticism towards anything that resembled religion. What made learning about Buddhism from the Mahayana standpoint especially difficult was the resemblance it bore to Christian practices, such as the veneration of saints, rituals, prayer, statuary, iconography and ceremony.

Despite the elaborate rituals and ceremonies in the Zen temple, I sensed an inherent dissimilarity between the Buddha's teachings in the Pali texts and the Mahayana form of Buddhism. This perception, coupled with my innate curiosity, impelled me to explore the original teachings of the Buddha, specifically the Pali texts. Over the course of several years, I came to the realization that I could not remain a follower of the Buddha in the Mahayana tradition. I firmly believe that to genuinely seek Nibbana, one must possess an intimate comprehension of the Dhamma without the distractions of saint worship, rituals, prayer, or ceremony, which according to the Pali texts, the Buddha himself did not teach or endorse.

My study of the Pali texts instilled in me a sense of urgency to focus on the most crucial matter—obtaining a correct understanding of what the Buddha taught, particularly as my time in this life grew shorter. Distractions preventing me from achieving this goal began falling away. Gradually, the true essence of the Buddha Dhamma came into view the more I understood the Four Noble Truths. These things led me to see that the Theravada school, the oldest surviving school of Buddhism since the time of the Buddha, was the simplest path between point A and point B.

The First Edition of this work, I presented in the format of an academic research paper, has been positively received beyond my expectations, with readership across nearly every continent. As was expected, criticism came from Mahayana practitioners, but surprisingly, these criticisms came from laypeople rather than ordained monks or nuns. I did not give much weight to their claims due to their obvious lack of wisdom, and undeveloped adolescent understanding of the Dhamma. It was clear, in some instances, that their understanding and knowledge of the Dhamma lacked direct experience because of the presence of a patina of greed, delusion, ignorance and hatred. Not only did their critiques lack any ontological consideration, which raised doubts about their credibility, but emphasized the depth of their credulity. I approached these criticisms with an impartial mindset, as taught by the Buddha in the Dhammapada:

*“How can a troubled mind understand the path?
If a man is disturbed he will never be filled with knowledge.
An untroubled mind, no longer seeking to consider what is right and what is wrong; A
mind beyond judgements, watches and understands.”*

I considered ignoring those who say Buddhism is a religion, but instead imagined how the Buddha dealt with Brahman priests who opposed him. He answered when necessary and refrained when it wasn't. I don't accept the idea that the Buddha or the Dhamma have anything in common with conventional religion. Whenever the Buddha was challenged, he always remained focused on the core truth of both the Dhamma and the *dhammā*,¹ as responding in any other manner would detract from the truth of both.

ii.

¹ Dhammā: transliteration “The way things are.” In the Buddha’s teachings, the term “Dhamma” (“Dharma” in Sanskrit) refers to the Buddha’s teachings, which are believed to *reveal* the nature of reality and the path to liberation from suffering. The Dhamma is considered to be universal and timeless, and it encompasses both the Buddha’s teachings and the natural laws that govern the universe. On the other hand, “dhammā” (also spelled “dharma” in Sanskrit) generally refers to phenomena, including mental and physical events, mental states, and ethical principles. In the Buddha Dhamma philosophy of dhammā, all phenomena are impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not-self, and understanding this truth is a crucial component of the path to liberation. Both terms are central to the Buddha’s teachings, but they have distinct meanings. The Dhamma refers specifically to the Buddha’s teachings, while dhammā encompasses all phenomena, both mental and physical, and includes the principles underlying the Dhamma.

Recognizing the significance of preserving equanimity or *upekkha*, as it is defined in the Pāli texts, I have been mindful of avoiding the pitfalls of becoming a soapbox Buddhist, a defender, or a vigilante guardian of the Theravada school. Instead, I aspire to be an impartial examiner who reports on the evidence I have accumulated through years of applying the Dhamma to my life. However, in keeping with the adage "I tell it as I see it," I do not hesitate to express my views candidly. Practicing equanimity in the present age poses a challenge. Nonetheless, I have come to recognize over time that the only genuine way to defend the Buddha Dhamma is to practice it. Through my practice of equanimity, I have discovered that *upekkha* is more than just acknowledging or observing the concept; it is, in fact, a path towards liberation from falling into judgmentalism.

According to the Pāli texts, *upekkha* entails a comprehensive perspective, rather than a sense of superiority. Practicing *upekkha* empowers individuals to navigate between their likes and dislikes, commendation and condemnation, without attachment or bias towards any particular viewpoint. This equanimity allows one to transcend personal biases and avoid getting trapped in a cycle of judgmentalism. Nevertheless, it is important to note that *upekkha* does not imply being impartial or neutral. Instead, it denotes having a well-rounded and nuanced perspective. When confronted with situations, *upekkha* encourages individuals to make informed decisions based on facts and truth, rather than being restricted by a rigid binary of right or wrong. Nevertheless, there may be situations, such as ontological comparisons between the Buddha Dhamma and the characteristics of faith-based religions, where a clear-cut explanation is necessary. In such cases, I endeavor to provide a direct and clear analysis.

In my view, the objections raised by certain Mahayana adherents that consider Buddhism a religion are indicative of the current era, which is characterized by an air of superiority, entitlement, privilege, and self-centeredness. These attitudes are rooted in greed and ignorance. While the term "Buddhism" might suggest a system of worship, it is worth noting that the Buddha did not teach "Buddhism," nor did he endorse practices such as rituals, worship of individuals, personality cults, prayer, or the veneration of statues. When these practices manifest in various forms of corrupted Buddhism, it is because they are later additions that stray from the original teachings found in the Pāli texts.

While it may not be incorrect to regard Buddhism as a religion, the original teachings of the Buddha, known as the Dhamma, have been distorted over time due to the influence of organized religion, tradition, culture, and nationalism. Contemporary Buddhism, with its altered and adulterated foundations, frequently misrepresents the Buddha's teachings and the practices he espoused. Many followers of Buddhism rely on later interpretations and commentaries written in Sanskrit, which have been demonstrated to produce erroneous translations, leading to interpolations of original Pāli concepts and teachings.

The Buddha's teachings were centered on the cessation of human suffering and death, rather than on religious rituals or worship. Any references to these practices in the earliest Pāli texts relate to Brahman and Hindu influences, which the Buddha deemed unnecessary in achieving Nibbana, the liberation from the cycle of birth and death known as samsara.

In this Third Edition, I delve deeper into the core principles of the Buddha Dhamma. I firmly believe that the essence of the Buddha's teachings, rather than cultural traditions, should be the primary focus of study. Once one immerses oneself in the original texts of the Buddha Dhamma, their desire to defend the school diminishes, replaced by a desire to defend the Buddha's Dhamma. Despite the numerous alterations and additions to the Dhamma over the years, the fundamental principles remain unchanged, and it is here that the Buddha, like a metaphorical physician, presents the path to liberation from greed, hate, and delusion, leading to the attainment of Nibbana. In the words of Cambridge scholar Richard Gombrich:

"The Buddha is the great physician, the Dhamma is the remedy he prescribes, the Sangha is the nurse who administers that remedy."

Throughout history, the Theravada school has maintained its focus on preserving the Buddha's original teachings. This conservative school has undergone minimal changes since the time of the Buddha, and its name, "Doctrine of the Elders," underscores its focus on passing the teachings from senior monks who impart the Buddha's wisdom to younger monks and nuns. The revival of interest in the Pāli language, the language that has preserved the teachings since the Buddha's time, is largely due to the efforts of monks and researchers within the Theravada school who are prominent translators and have made significant contributions to enhancing our comprehension of the Buddha's original teachings.² While the existence of written records from the Buddha's lifetime is a matter of dispute, indications in ancient texts suggest that some form of written records did indeed exist, but did not survive the great span of time.

Throughout history, humankind has had a preoccupation with religion. This persistence is attributed to various factors, predominantly with the support and integration from governments. While historians explore the survival of powerful religious movements, the official texts of faith-based religions emphasize a relationship with a supernatural entity based on faith. In contrast, the Buddha's teachings in the Dhamma provide a path to truth by revealing the way things actually are, which is grounded in individual experience rather than faith. Despite the human pursuit of truth, religious doctrines rely on faith and lack empirical evidence to support their claims.

² Notable Pali translators: See Appendix

Religious evolution appears to mimic the Darwinian principle of "survival of the fittest," where doctrines are commercially and politically promoted as true and right, based on the ideas and concepts they espouse. One would be remiss if the obvious weren't mentioned: Successful survival skills of the largest religions are those with the fullest purses, the best entertainment, and programs that are effective at firmly disseminating the fear of God. However, history has shown that faith-based doctrines are often flawed and their legitimacy is frequently called into question. Religion has recurrently been associated with aggression, coercion, and violence, used to enforce the idea that one's own religion is the only correct one. This has made it challenging for the faithful to explore other sources of truth, for fear of being ostracized by their religious authority or worse abandonment by God. The success of religions is not necessarily due to the validity of their doctrines, but rather the result of powerful patronage, such as the case of the Roman Emperor Constantine and Christianity, as pointed out by Prof. Richard Gombrich. The desire to conform to these beliefs often outweighs the risk of change, but this raises questions about the emergence, spread, and persistence of faith-based religions.

The credibility of a religion that claims to offer truth and explanations about the world is questionable if it cannot provide a satisfactory understanding of itself within the boundaries of the nature of reality. The inability of faith-based religions to explain the world raises doubts about the validity of their doctrines and beliefs. A credible solution to the problems of humanity requires a clear understanding of the issues at hand. Doctrines that offer no insight into the causes of human suffering cannot provide practical knowledge or benefit to individuals. If a religion fails to provide a solution for the problems for a single individual, it is difficult to claim that it has a solution that is effective for all of humanity.

To truly comprehend the world, personal experiences and discoveries are necessary. A system that claims to assist in overcoming life's obstacles must first address and acknowledge these challenges. The efficacy of any proposed solution is dependent on a clear understanding of the root causes of these struggles. The truth exists objectively and independently of our acknowledgement of it, unlike many faith-based religions that revolve around the personality of their founder. In contrast, the Buddha's teachings, or Dhamma, place emphasis on truth over the individual. The Theravada school exemplifies this principle, recognizing the Buddha as a great teacher and historical source of the Dhamma, but not as its central focus. The *Vikkali Sutta*³ serves as an example of this, where the Buddha explained to a sick monk that the physical Buddha represents the Dhamma, and true understanding comes not from focusing on the Buddha, but from understanding the Dhamma itself.

V.

³ Vikkali Sutta: <https://suttacentral.net/sn22.87/en/bodhi?reference=none&highlight=false> | <https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn22/sn22.087x.wlsh.html>

The Theravada school places great emphasis on personal understanding and experience as the means of discovering the truth of the Buddha's teachings. This is highlighted in the *Garava Sutta*,⁴ which affirms that past and future Buddhas, as well as the present one, rely solely on the Dhamma and not on its teachers. In contrast, faith-based religion such as the Abrahamic religions, typically prescribe a set doctrine without providing a rationale for the basis of that faith. This lack of clarity is apparent in the varied interpretations of the biblical verse found at Hebrews 11:1, which is the foundation of their entire dogma and doctrine.

The veracity of the Buddha's teachings can only be confirmed through personal experience. On the other hand, faith-based religions like the Abrahamic religions assert that they can explain the human condition caused by sin, but they are unable to justify the belief in this doctrine, relying only on the scripture in Hebrews 11:1.⁵ This results in the alteration of the scripture to fit different doctrines and dogmas. However, for any teaching to be considered truthful, it must possess the quality of being unchanging, regardless of whether it is acknowledged or not, and be capable of being discovered as truth by a single individual.

The law of gravity provides an example of natural law or natural truth that exists independently of human awareness. In contrast, faith-based religions rely on philosophical speculation and require believers to accept doctrines on faith rather than objective evidence. The Buddha emphasized the importance of basing truth on personal experience and observation, and offered a solution to universal human problems like suffering and death through the discoverable truth of the Dhamma. The Buddha did not require any religious affiliation to end suffering and death, as the consequences of human actions and intentions ultimately lead to these outcomes. Therefore, a non-religious solution is necessary to address these fundamental issues.

In contrast to the Buddha's teaching, faith-based religions have faced challenges of inaccurate communication for centuries. This is because followers of these religions tend to ignore information that does not align with their beliefs, and instead interpret their religious teachings to fit their social, cultural, and political views. Furthermore, faith-based religions rely on bureaucratic institutions and intermediaries to relay the message of a supernatural entity, rather than allowing individuals to directly access the truth. This is a stark contrast to the Buddha's teaching, the Dhamma, which emphasizes the importance of individual effort and does not require any intermediaries or specific places to achieve a deeper understanding of the nature of existence. The Dhamma is accessible to all, without the need for ceremony or other formalities.

4 Garava Sutta: Samyutta Nikaya 6.2 "The Blessed One, who is at present the Arahant, the Rightly Self-awakened One, dwells in dependence on the very Dhamma itself, honoring and respecting it."

⁵ Hebrews 11:1: "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." English Standard Version- <https://biblehub.com/hebrews/11-1.htm>

Although being late to the game, in the ten years that have passed since first stepping into that Zen temple, the Dhamma has taught me that life is a constant stream of consciousness, and that the life that my existence represents at the moment is but a blip in time. I have also come to understand that the characteristics (*gati*)⁶ which I was born with, and those that have evolved over the course of my life, are impermanent ‘things’ that I am capable of changing. I wish to assure the reader that what I write here however, is not representative of my ‘self,’ but rather is representative of a human being’s characteristics that have been exposed to the Dhamma. I hope that you find not only some benefit from the information of this little book, but that you find a reason to consider what the Buddha’s teachings can mean for your own life.

The Buddha established the principles of monastic life, which is considered a groundbreaking idea in his time. However, his intention was not to create an institution in the same manner as faith-based religions. Instead, his concept of monasticism was based on reason and aimed at preserving the Dhamma and providing a solution for the human condition. To determine the validity of any doctrine that addresses human problems, it must have the capability to explain the human condition and be based on tangible, non-metaphysical facts. This makes the Buddha's teachings distinct from the doctrines and dogmas of faith-based religion.

An examination of the Buddha's original teachings prior to the Third Council in 250 B.C.E.⁷ under King Ashoka the Great, 218 years after the Buddha's passing, shows a pristine doctrine that had not been impacted by the Mahasangika Sect⁸ who pretended to be monks. It was at this Council that the teachings of the Buddha were designated as the *Vibhajjavada Doctrine*, or the ‘Doctrine of Analysis,’⁹ by the elder monk Moggaliputta-Tissa and announced to King Ashoka.

For those who seek to follow the teachings of the Buddha, understanding the purpose of practice is the key to unlocking the truth about the nature of reality, including the reality of your own life. There is no need for any specific title or label, such as disciple or student, as the only requirement is a willingness to grasp and implement the teachings. The ultimate goal is not salvation, as is the case in many faith-based religions, but instead an education about human suffering, particularly your own, and ultimately liberation from the things that cause your suffering. This liberation leads to the attainment of true happiness, which is the only thing that is permanent.

⁶ Gati: See Appendix

⁷ Third Buddhist Council: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_Buddhist_council

⁸ Mahasangika Sect: See Appendix

⁹ Doctrine of Analysis: See Appendix

The term "Buddhist," as we know it today, is a modern invention, and is not found within the Buddha's teachings. As noted by Rhys Davids,¹⁰ a 19th-century Pali Tipitaka scholar:

"Not one of the 500 million people who offer flowers at Buddhist shrines, who are influenced by Dhamma teachings, can be considered a 'Buddhist' in the true sense."

The concept of "Buddhism" and a "Buddhist," as known today, resulted from 19th century misinterpretations, alterations, and additions to the Buddha's original teachings. These labels emerged as a modern invention to fit into legal structures, mostly for convenience. I recognize the Theravada school, which prioritizes preserving the original teachings of the Buddha without incorporating institutionalization, rites, rituals, saints or veneration of icons. Many modern Buddhists have beliefs and values that are not rooted in the Buddha Dhamma, which does not involve institutions or cultural traditions. It is up to the reader to determine whether or not the Buddha's teachings align with faith-based religions and therefore should be considered a "religion" in the conventional sense.

Additionally, one of the reasons for my switch to the Theravada school was due to the discrepancies I discovered between the earliest Pali Suttas and the Mahayana Sutras and later Mahayana commentaries. Pali Suttas and Mahayana Sutras are two different collections of texts revealing some significant differences in content, language, and interpretation. Pali Suttas, also known as the "Tipitaka," are a collection of texts in the Pali language that are considered to be the oldest surviving texts containing the actual utterances of the Buddha. They are primarily associated with the Theravada school, which emphasizes the original teachings of the Buddha as preserved in the Pali Canon. The Pali Suttas are considered to be the most reliable source for understanding the original teachings of the Buddha. They cover a wide range of topics, including ethics, meditation, and the nature of reality, and are written in a straightforward and practical style.

Mahayana Sutras, also known as the "Mahayana Canon," are a collection of scriptures in Sanskrit and other languages that are associated with the Mahayana form of Buddhism. They emerged hundreds of years later than the Pali Suttas and are an elaborate expression of Mahayana Dhamma philosophy and teachings. The Mahayana Sutras include a vast array of texts, some of which are highly symbolic and mystical in nature, and often present the Buddha as a divine being who has the power to save all beings.

¹⁰ Rhys Davids: *See Appendix*

One of the main differences between the Pali Suttas and Mahayana Sutras is their language. The Pali Suttas are written in the Pali language, while the Mahayana Sutras are written in Sanskrit, Chinese and other languages. However, the Buddha cautioned against translating the Dhamma into Sanskrit because the meaning of various words is specific to the Pali language and could not be rendered into Sanskrit. Additionally, the Mahayana Sutras tend to be more elaborate and symbolic, while the Pali Suttas are more straightforward and practical in their presentation of the Buddha's teachings.

There are also some differences in interpretation and emphasis between the two collections. The Theravada tradition places a strong emphasis on personal meditation and the attainment of individual liberation from suffering, while the Mahayana tradition places more emphasis on compassion and the ideal of the bodhisattva, a being who vows to work for the liberation of all sentient beings.

During my time as a law student, it was crucial to be able to provide relevant legal citations to prove the validity of a case. The more "case law" or codified law that supported a case, the greater the likelihood of success of one's claims. However, to satisfy the requirements of the court, the laws cited must be officially recognized authorities. Therefore, in order to establish the validity of a case, the sources used must be deemed correct and legitimate. I reasoned that this was also the best way to approach the differences between the actual teachings of the Buddha and the Mahayana texts.¹¹ The older source of the Buddha's teachings is the Pali texts, and are considered to be closest to the actual words of the Buddha. Whenever any kind of historical research is conducted, researchers always seek out, either sources from eyewitnesses, records of the original event or sources closest to the original event. When conducting serious research involving ancient historical events the following 'best practices' rule should be observed.

1. Identify and evaluate your sources for reliability and credibility.
2. Cross-check your sources to corroborate information.
3. Understand the historical and cultural context of events.
4. Avoid anachronism: Understand events within their historical context.
5. Be aware of bias, including your own.
6. Record your sources to help others evaluate your research.

I have endeavored to offer a comprehensive view of information to address the inquiry of whether Buddha's teachings constitute a religion within the limitations of this book. Nonetheless, the information I have shared is merely a small fraction of the available data that can support the response to the question, *'Is Buddhism a Religion? Why it Matters.'*

¹¹ Pali Canon and Mahayana Canon (See Appendix)

PREFACE to the First and Second Editions

The question of whether the teachings of Buddha are considered a religion by the world is a controversial issue, but it shouldn't be. A thorough examination of the core teachings of the Buddha reveals them to be the furthest thing from the concept of religion.

Throughout my sixty-eight years, including the early years I spent studying and participating in faith-based religions, I have come to understand the distinctions between the actual teachings of Buddha, the conventional perceptions of Buddhism, and the conventional understanding of what constitutes a religion. This book aims to reveal that the teachings of Buddha are a stark contrast to the commonly held notion of what constitutes a religion. To associate Buddhism with religion goes against the very purpose of the Dhamma. Those who claim that Buddhism is a religion include Western monks, nuns, laypersons, and the general public. Labeling Buddha's teachings as a religion is simply a human-made concept. Without proper understanding, the interpretation of Buddha's teachings is often shaped to fit societal or cultural norms, which the Buddha referred to as clinging to traditions (*paramparaya*).

This book delves into the question of whether the teachings of the Buddha can be considered a "religion." Instead of using the commonly accepted term "Buddhism" to refer to all its forms within the modern conventional meaning of the word, this book employs a convention using the word "Buddhism" to distinguish the adulterated and later interpretations comprising the modern forms of Buddhism created by humans since the inception of Mahayana. In essence this convention uses only the word "Dhamma" in reference to the original teachings of the Buddha. The word Buddhism refers to various all forms of Buddhism that were created hundreds of years after the Buddha had died.

This book presents a thorough analysis based on comparative data, avoiding religious-like dogma and traditionalism. A comparative study of the Buddha's teachings from various perspectives, including etymology, philology, epistemology, linguistics, and pragmatism, suggests that only linguistic, epistemological, and pragmatic philosophies accurately reflect the concepts taught by the Buddha. This book explores the reasons behind why some individuals, including laypersons, monks, nuns, non-sectarians, and secularists, defend the idea that Buddhism is a religion. I use the terms "Buddhism" and "Dhamma" to compare both with faith-based religions as these are fundamentally different. The modern term "Buddhism" is too general and doesn't reflect the Pure Dhamma of the Buddha's time. The concept of "Buddhism" did not exist when the Buddha's teachings were recorded. The modern concept of "Buddhism," can be considered a religion.

Editor's Note:

This book contains an extensive glossary of Pali words that are used or mentioned in this book. Each Pali word is analyzed and deconstructed into its constituent parts with an explanation for the meaning of each part of the word, including vowel structure and meaning. Each Pali word is analyzed for its contextual usage within the Pali texts. Meanings and translations of the Pali words are based on the latest, most up-to-date understanding of the Pali language. However, these translations may not be completely free from incorrect entries based on current controversies surrounding the meaning of particular words. The author, Dipobhasadhamma, has taken every precaution to provide the best possible information regarding the Pali words he has used in this book.

The Religion Pigeonhole- What's in a Name?

The first identifying issue inherent in the question of whether or not "Buddhism" is a religion, is the phrase "Buddhism" itself. Given that the concept of "Buddhism" is a creation of the modern age, does this concept agree with the Buddha's teachings? The term "Buddhism" is a modern construct that was developed in the West to describe the various teachings and practices associated with the Buddha and his followers. However, the Buddha himself did not use the term "Buddhism" nor did he conceive of his teachings as a formal religious system, which is an extremely critical point. Instead, the Buddha's teachings were focused on practical methods for achieving liberation from suffering and gaining insight into the nature of reality.

Over time, the Buddha's teachings were codified and organized into a set of texts and practices that came to be known as the "Buddhist" tradition. While there is no single, monolithic Buddhist tradition, there are a number of common themes and practices that are shared by different modern forms of Buddhism. The term "Buddhism" is an inadequate and misleading way to describe the Buddha's teachings, as it imposes a Western and modern perspective on a tradition that emerged from a different cultural and historical context.

What does the suffix "ism" mean?

The suffix "ism" is a noun suffix that is used to form nouns that indicate a particular ideology, belief system, practice, or movement. For example, the Western concept of "Buddhism" is a belief system that is based on the teachings of the Buddha, and "capitalism" is an economic system that is based on the beliefs of private ownership and profit. The suffix comes from the Greek word "*ismos*," which means "state of" or "quality of." When added to the end of a word, it creates a new noun that describes a specific ideology, belief system, or practice.

Does not the word "Buddhism" seek to compartmentalize the teachings of the Buddha in the same manner as other "isms" do, say in the manner of Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism or Islamism? Given the Dhamma warnings about the attachment to forms, concepts and ideas, isn't the application of the word "Buddhism" somewhat paradoxical in nature? The answer is yes. The suffix "ism" implies the formation of a distinct belief system or ideology around a particular figure or set of teachings. Therefore, the term "Buddhism" might be understood as suggesting the development of a distinct religious or philosophical system based on the teachings of the Buddha.

However, it is not only clear, but true that the Buddha himself did not conceive of his teachings as a formalized religious or philosophical system. Rather, the Buddha's teachings were focused on practical methods for achieving liberation from suffering and gaining insight into the nature of reality.

Modern scholars and practitioners in the West have begun to question the validity of using the term "Buddhism" to describe the Buddha's teachings, as it implies a degree of rigidity or dogmatism that is not in keeping with the Buddha's emphasis on individual experience and insight. The term "Buddhism" has become widely accepted as a useful way to describe the various traditions and practices associated with the Buddha and his followers. While it is important to be aware of the potential limitations of this term, it remains commonly used and has been integrated into Western culture and thought.

Humans tend to categorize and label concepts or ideas as a way of making sense of the world around them. The use of the suffix "ism" to describe a particular belief system or ideology might be helpful in providing a framework for understanding and discussing certain complex ideas, but in the case of the Buddha's teachings, the term "Buddhism" creates both a paradox and a dichotomy. The use of labels and categories can sometimes limit our understanding of the nuances and complexities of a particular concept or idea. This is especially true in the case of the Buddha's teachings, which are focused on individual experience and insight rather than a rigid set of beliefs or practices.

While the term "Buddhism" can be a useful way to describe the various teachings and practices associated with the Buddha and his followers, it is important to be aware of the potential limitations of this term. Applying the label of "Buddhism" to the Buddha's teachings may imply a degree of uniformity or dogmatism that is not in keeping with the Buddha's emphasis on individual experience and insight.

The use of the term "Buddhism" to describe the teachings of the Buddha detracts from what the Buddha actually taught in several ways. Firstly, the term "Buddhism" implies a degree of uniformity and dogmatism that is not in keeping with the Buddha's emphasis on individual experience and insight. The Buddha did not conceive of his teachings as a rigid system of beliefs or practices, but rather as a practical means for achieving liberation from suffering and gaining insight into the nature of reality. The use of the term "Buddhism" creates the impression that the Buddha's teachings are a fixed and unchanging doctrine, rather than a dynamic and evolving set of practices and insights.

Secondly, the term "Buddhism" obscures the diversity and complexity of the teachings and practices associated with the Buddha. The various forms of Buddhism that are associated with the Buddha's teachings are rich and multifaceted, and they resist easy categorization or labeling. Applying the term "Buddhism" to these diverse and multifaceted traditions creates the impression that they are all the same, when in fact they differ in significant ways.

The term "Buddhism" creates a false dichotomy between the teachings of the Buddha and the teachings of other spiritual or philosophical traditions. The Buddha's teachings were developed in a particular cultural and historical context, and while they may share some similarities with other traditions that emerged in the same region and time period, the Buddha's teachings remain unique from those traditions. So, overall, while the term "Buddhism" can be a useful way to describe the teachings and practices associated with the Buddha, it is important to be aware of the potential limitations of this term. The Buddha's teachings are complex, multifaceted, and resist easy categorization, and we must approach them with an open mind and a willingness to explore their nuances and complexities.

More than any other reason, the *perception* that the Buddha's teachings are a religion in the West is influenced by the application of the term "Buddhism" to describe the Buddha's teachings. The term "Buddhist" like the term "Buddhism" implies a degree of uniformity and dogmatism that does not accurately reflect the diversity and complexity of the Buddha's teachings. However, the use of this term has become entrenched in Western discourse about the Buddha's teachings, and it may contribute to the *perception* that the Buddha's teachings are a religion in the Western context.

Additionally, the *perception* that the Buddha's teachings are a religion in Western cultures is often times due to misinterpretations of the Dhamma, influenced by the politically-oriented mindsets of Western-ordained monks, along with exposure to cultural practices of certain Buddhist sects that do not align with the Buddha's teachings. It is important for Western Buddhists to release their attachment to political and socially-conditioned philosophies, which contradict the principles taught by the Buddha. This attachment stems from a desire to fit into the larger religious infrastructure, but many people view religion as a trap with false promises, and this perspective should be recognized.

Billboards promoting churches and faith often make grandiose claims like "Put your trust in God" or "Jesus will save you." Despite the fact that these sales pitches have been around for thousands of years, the evidence for their validity is still not apparent. When we apply Ockham's Theorem to religion, which states that the simplest explanation tends to be the truth, we can see that faith-based religions often fail to deliver on their promises. This is particularly evident when we consider the popular adage "the proof is in the pudding." Originally, this phrase referred to the quality of sausage and how it was judged based on its taste. Similarly, after personally "tasting" a wide variety of faith-based "puddings," I can attest to their flavorlessness, mediocrity, and overall unsatisfying nature.

In light of this, we should be skeptical of claims made by religious institutions and leaders. We should strive to examine evidence critically and independently, and not be swayed by mere rhetoric or emotional appeals. In doing so, we can make more informed decisions about our own beliefs and values, and better understand the world around us.

While it may seem tempting to include the Buddha into the category of religion to reap economic benefits in the salvation market, such an approach overlooks the Buddha's true intention in teaching the Dhamma. The Dhamma serves as a guide towards awakening one's understanding of the nature of reality, free from the constraints and biases of religious dogma. To fully appreciate the Dhamma's value, one must relinquish the tendency to become attached to labels and concepts associated with religion, and instead cultivate mental balance and equanimity. The idea of equating the Buddha with religion appears to be politically motivated, for the purpose of integrating his teachings for the convenience of social consensus. However, it ultimately detracts from the Dhamma's purity and obstructs deeper exploration of its meaning. It's important to recognize that the value of the Dhamma lies in its philosophy and principles, and not in conforming to conventional religious structures.

Mahayana vs. Buddha Dhamma

Throughout this book, I have made critical comments regarding the Mahayana tradition, which may seem like a lack of neutrality or equanimity. However, my decision to transition from the Mahayana Zen tradition to the Theravada school was based on several factors, rather than a single one. My past involvement with faith-based religions left me with unanswered questions about the meaning of life, death, and happiness. Initially, my decision to join the Zen Monastery was not based on a deep understanding of the Buddha's core teachings, but was motivated by what was readily available, and a lack of knowledge about the Dhamma.

As a beginner in the Mahayana tradition, I hoped it would provide answers to life's biggest questions. However, I found that the focus was on rituals, prayer, and veneration of statues, rather than self-discovery through meditation and study of the Dhamma. The Buddha's journey resonated with me, but I struggled to understand the purpose of Mahayana rituals, which felt like a repetition of my previous experiences with faith-based religions. While my perspective doesn't discredit Mahayana, my observations critique those who claim to know the Buddha's purpose while having only a limited understanding through the Mahayana perspective. As someone who sought to learn the essence of the Dhamma, from the Mahayana perspective, I understand why it could be considered a religion, because in practice, Mahayana shares many similarities with faith-based religions.

Like the Buddha, I realized that religious-like practices were insufficient in answering the fundamental questions of human existence, therefore, I turned to the Buddha's teachings and studied the Dhamma directly. With an academic background, I recognized the importance of understanding the historical context of a subject before diving into it. By studying the Buddha's teachings and their context, I aimed to gain a deeper comprehension of his philosophy by applying it to my own journey of awakening.

My criticism of the Mahayana tradition does not mean that I completely reject it. However, I found that it did not provide the answers I was seeking. I sought answers from the original source, the Dhamma, in order to grasp the full meaning of his teachings and an understanding of what dhammā was, instead of relying on the interpretations of Milarepa, Nagarjuna, or Avalokiteśvara and Guanyin. These figures, including Avalokiteśvara,¹² are not present in the Dhamma, but only emerged in the Mahayana tradition five centuries after the Buddha's death in the Avatamsaka Sutra¹³ and Lotus Sutra. To truly understand the Dhamma, I felt it was necessary to study the teachings directly from the source, rather than relying on later interpretations and additions.

Avalokiteśvara, the supernatural fictitious figure with a thousand arms,¹⁴ is not mentioned in any of the earliest Buddhist texts and did not arise until some 500 years after the Buddha's passing. This suggests that Avalokiteśvara is a human-created concept since he is not mentioned by the Buddha. If such an entity were crucial to achieving liberation from suffering, it is likely that the Buddha would have mentioned it. Modern scholars, historians, and language experts believe that Avalokiteśvara evolved from the Hindu worship of the god Shiva, as per the rules of Sanskrit sound combination (sandhi¹⁵) *a+īśvara* becomes *eśvara*. The name Avalokiteśvara means "lord who gazes down at the world," and this connection is recognized in the Tibetan Encyclopedia of Buddhism:

"As Buddhism evolved over times, it had to face the new Puranic Brahmanism with the influence of the Vishnu, Shiva and other deities rising over time, compared to the other Vedic deities who were now often reduced to a tutelary status. Puranic Brahmanism was highly syncretic assimilating everything that came in its way. Even Buddha himself was assimilated to the Brahmanical Pantheon as one of the Avatar-s of Vishnu. At the same time, Buddhism had also attempted in assimilation of the Brahmanical Deities into its fold.

*However, this part is not that much widely known. Buddhism in its Theravada version was more orthodox, and didn't officially expand beyond the already assimilated Indra, Brahma and other early deities. However, Mahayana Buddhism was highly assimilative in nature. **The framework of Mahayana easily enabled the direct import of deities into its fold.***

12 Avalokiteshvara: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avalokite%C5%9Bvara> | <https://encyclopediaofbuddhism.org/wiki/Avalokitesvara>

13 Buddhāvataṃsaka Sutra (aka Avatamsaka Sutra)

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddh%C4%81vata%E1%B9%83saka_S%C5%ABtra#History)

14 Avalokiteśvara: Etymology combines the verbal prefix *ava* "down", *lokita*, a past participle of the verb *lok* "to notice, behold, observe", here used in an active sense; and finally, *īśvara*, "lord of the World", "ruler of the World", "sovereign of the World" or "master of the World."

¹⁵ Sandhi: *Sanskrit* "The Sanskrit word "sandhi" means "junction" or "joining," referring to the rules of sound changes that occur when words come together in Sanskrit language."

When Mahayana was faced with Shaivism and Vaishnavism, it also had played its part of trying to assimilate Shiva and Vishnu in Mahayana. More specifically, we'll deal only the Assimilation of Shiva as a deity into Buddhism. Shiva was initially considered as an Emanation of Avalokiteśvara. It was also believed that Shiva himself will attain Buddhata (i.e Buddhahood) in the future as Bhasmeshvara Buddha.”¹⁶

The sutra narrative regarding Avalokiteśvara and Shiva states:

“Moving further to the narrative end of the Sutra, Shiva appears before the Buddha, prostrated before him and asks for the Prediction of Buddha-hood. He is directed by the Buddha to Avalokiteśvara. Maheshvara praises Avalokiteśvara and requests Vyakarana from him. On his request Avalokiteśvara bestows the prophecy for Buddhahood.”



Avalokiteshvara (left) - Shiva (right)

Again, none of the above mysticism was ever taught, let alone mentioned by the Buddha in the Pali texts. Doing so by the Buddha would have placed an obvious paradox or dichotomy into the Dhamma, the subject of which not only negates the Buddha's admonition against the validity or necessity of such things with regard to the purpose of achieving liberation. Such mystical dialog serves no purpose for achieving the state of Nibbana (the blowing out of the causes of suffering). Like the Buddha's teaching, known as the “Four Imponderables” (*acinteyya*), such mystical concepts have no place in one's efforts to understand and practice the Dhamma. The “Four Imponderables are:

1. The nature of the Buddha (Buddha-acinteyya)
2. The nature of the Dhamma (Dhamma-acinteyya)
3. The nature of the Sangha (Sangha-acinteyya)
4. The workings of kamma (Kamma-acinteyya)

¹⁶ Tibetan Buddhist Encyclopedia:
http://www.tibetanbuddhistencyclopedia.com/en/index.php/Shiva_in_Buddhism

It is widely recognized by those knowledgeable in the Dhamma that the Buddha chose not to speak or debate on certain subjects. This decision was based on his profound understanding of the purpose of the Dhamma and his belief that subjects not directly related to ending suffering and achieving Nibbana were inconsequential. I strive to follow the same principles as the Buddha. For me, understanding the supernatural aspect of Avalokiteśvara, his connection to Shiva, or the benefits of worshiping such a being, seemed irrelevant and unimportant. I was not interested in embracing yet another faith-based religion, similar to those I had encountered in the past. I do not view faith-based religions as inherently negative, as many people benefit from them in some manner. However, if a belief system cannot answer basic questions about the human condition or provide an understanding of reality, I see little value or benefit in it. If worshiping a supreme being and fearing devils only provides hope but no tangible results, what is the point?

Mahayana Buddhism prioritizes becoming a Bodhisattva, which is a person who sacrifices their own liberation to help others, similar to the proselytizing doctrines of faith-based religions. However, I believe it's more practical to heal oneself before helping others, based on previous experiences. Through practicing the Dhamma, one gains experience, knowledge, and wisdom to convey directly to others, similar to the path followed by the Buddha.

As a former Christian, I can say that by the standards and measures of the faith-based religions I was a part of, I would be considered a successful practitioner. I followed all the rules, participated in all the ceremonies, living my life in accordance with godliness and charity, achieved a deep level of knowledge about the Bible, and believed that my faith in God and Christ would secure an eventual place in heaven. However, if I hadn't learned about the Buddha and his teachings, it is highly improbable that I would have ever found the answers to my questions about life, death, and happiness from Christianity.

As for Mahayana Buddhism, if you find answers to your questions and aspire to live as a Bodhisattva, filled with compassion and aware of the emptiness and impermanence of all things, then it is commendable and honorable. If you are a Mahayanist and feel more comfortable within a religious-like atmosphere, with worship and prayer, then by all means, continue with that. Mahayana Buddhism is often considered to be the closest non-theistic religion similar to faith-based systems of the Abrahamic religions. The Dalai Lama, a Tibetan Mahayana monk, once famously said, *"Do not try to use what you learn from Buddhism to be a Buddhist; use it to be a better whatever-you-already-are."* However, I personally wasn't comfortable merely exchanging one form of religion for another; there had to be something deeper, capable of exploring the essence and meaning of human life.

Discovering the truth about reality and the human condition that leads to suffering, aging, sickness, and death was my ultimate goal, just as it was for the Buddha. At first, the Buddha focused on his own liberation, which may seem self-centered. However, his journey led him to a deeper understanding of the nature of existence, which he called the *dhammā*.

Only through his own liberation and awakening could he then teach others what he had learned. Without taking that initial step, which some may view as selfish, the Buddha would not have been able to attain a direct knowledge and experience of the Dhamma. Buddha's initial focus on himself ultimately led to his enlightenment and becoming a Buddha with the knowledge and understanding that would help countless millions of people to discover the Path to Nibbana.

To become a successful professor of history at the university level, it is necessary to invest time and effort in learning about your subject while gaining a deep understanding of the events and forces that shaped the World. Similarly, the Buddha pursued a path of learning and practicing meditation to gain a profound understanding of reality, which he then shared with others to help them break free from suffering. As for myself, I have found value in focusing on the practical application of the Dhamma in my daily life, which has given me unshakeable confidence (*saddha*) in its teachings. I see little purpose in religious rituals, on the worship of statues and personalities, and instead focus on the practical teachings outlined by the Buddha in the Pali texts.

Rather than merely *doing*, in a ritualistic manner, I discovered a much deeper sense of what the Buddha taught by *becoming* a *Upāsaka* (Pali) or *Bhaudhayā* (Sinhala-භොද්ධයා)¹⁷ with an emphasis on understanding the nature of *dhammā*.¹⁸ I have concluded that religious rituals and the worship of statues have no value, as my understanding and practice of the Dhamma has produced positive results without the use of such so-called spiritual aids. The Buddha's teachings, like truth itself, require no defense or human-created imagery, and should not be interpreted beyond what is necessary. The Buddha's method of teaching has helped to preserve the intended context, minimizing misinterpretation and the risk of conjecture, mystical inference, and speculation. Deviations from the original context of the Buddha's teachings results in misinterpretations and forms of Buddhism that, in some instances, are in direct opposition to those original teachings. To determine if an idea aligns with the Buddha Dhamma, it must fall within the framework of the Four Noble Truths, which serve as the ultimate litmus test.

¹⁷ *Upāsaka, Bhaudhayā*: The word *Upāsaka* comes from “*upa*” + “*āsava*” + “*khaya*,” where those words mean “stay close to,” “eliminate” or “wear away” defilements. Thus, it means someone who stays close to the goal of eliminating defilements (*lobha, dōsa, mōha*) leading to Nibbāna. Both the Pali and Sinhala words have the same meaning.

¹⁸ Dhamma vs dhammā: *Dhammā* means to “bear or give rise to things in this world,” and *Dhamma* explains how. Buddha Dhamma explains how such *dhammās* arise and how to stop them from arising. |

Unity of Diversity or a Product of Consensus?

Most dictionaries define religion as theistic, based on the common and conventional usage among people. This is because of the consensus that religion involves belief in supernatural entities. While some see similarities between the teachings of the Buddha and those of world religions, these similarities are based on shared human norms, such as good and bad behavior, good and bad intentions, and ideals of perfection. Social norms arise from consensus, meaning agreement among people to share the same beliefs, values, and ideas.¹⁹ Conformity to consensus is seen as a positive thing and becomes a part of one's social identity. Consensus binds societies together and creates stability, even when the belief underlying the consensus has negative social effects.²⁰ This is explained by sociologist C. Wright Mills as "*social imagination*" and "*social equilibrium*."²¹ At present, the social consensus of religion is negative. To prove that this is the case for yourself, simply enter the phrase; "*Is religion viewed negatively?*" into any search engine. The results produced are overwhelmingly negative.²²

Social consensus is the shared agreement or understanding of a group or society about certain beliefs, values, or behaviors. Conformity, on the other hand, refers to the tendency of individuals to adjust their attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors to align with those of a group or society. The link between social consensus and conformity is that the degree of consensus within a group or society can influence the level of conformity among individuals. When there is a strong social consensus of certain beliefs, values, or behaviors, individuals may conform to these norms to avoid social rejection or gain social approval. In contrast, when there is less consensus, individuals may be more likely to express their own opinions or behaviors.

Conformity can also influence social consensus by reinforcing certain beliefs, values, or behaviors within a group or society. As individuals conform to these norms, they can strengthen and perpetuate them, leading to a more cohesive and stable social consensus. This kind of conformity has, over time, led to the creation of a Buddh~~ism~~ that socially and consensually conforms with the concepts of faith-based religion, at least in Western cultures. However, conformity can also have negative consequences, such as stifling creativity or independent thinking, leading to groupthink, and perpetuating harmful or discriminatory social norms. Therefore, it's important to strike a balance between social consensus and individual autonomy and critical thinking to foster a healthy and inclusive society. In an article titled: "*Five Ways Christianity Is Increasingly Viewed as Extremist*," the author, David Kinnaman examines society's current perceptions of faith and Christianity.

19 "How does a word get into a Merriam-Webster dictionary?" Merriam-Webster: Src:

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/help/faq-words-into-dictionary>

20 Social Norms: Src: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/social-norms/>

21 The Social Imagination: C. Wright Mills, 1959, Oxford University Press, pp. 31-45.

22 Is Religion Viewed Negatively? Src:

<https://duckduckgo.com/?q=is+religion+viewed+negatively&t=ffab&ia=web>

*“There are intensifying perceptions that faith is at the root of a vast number of societal ills. Though it remains the nation’s most dominant religion, Christianity faces significant headwind in the court of public opinion. The decades-old trend that Christianity is irrelevant is increasingly giving way to the notion that Christianity is bad for society. When calculated on the basis of the entire population, these perceptions represent significant numbers of adults who indicate anxiety about these kinds of religious expression. These factors include reading sacred literature (either the Bible or Koran) as well as donating money to or attending a religious institution. Three-quarters of all Americans—and nine out of ten Americans with no faith affiliation—agree with this statement.”*²³

Is it then perhaps a sign that society is coming around to the same perception of “religion” that was espoused by Karl Marx?

*“Religion may try to provide heart, but it fails. For Marx, the problem lies in the obvious fact that an opiate drug fails to fix a physical injury — it merely helps you forget pain and suffering. Relief from pain may be fine up to a point, but only as long as you are also trying to solve the underlying problems causing the pain. Similarly, religion does not fix the underlying causes of people’s pain and suffering — instead, it helps them forget why they are suffering and gets them to look forward to an imaginary future when the pain ceases.”*²⁴

Despite the claims made by all theistic faith-based religions to promote and induce goodness, prevent evil, and encourage people to act with equanimity, history has shown that they have consistently failed in these areas. From the first religious war in the 6th century BCE²⁵ to the present day, religion has demonstrated its inability to positively impact human behavior or prevent violence. Theist doctrines of faith simply don’t work in solving the problems of human existence, in part due to a lack of common communication among different faith-based denominations.

Throughout history, the Abrahamic religions - Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, have been associated with various forms of extremism, ranging from religious violence and persecution to the suppression of scientific inquiry and the subjugation of women and minorities. Judaism for example, has a long history of religious violence, dating back to the conquest of Canaan and the destruction of the First and Second Temples.²⁶ In more recent times, extremist elements within Judaism have been associated with the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the growth of Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

²³ Christianity Increasingly Viewed as Extremist” Src: <https://www.barna.com/research/five-ways-christianity-is-increasingly-viewed-as-extremist/>

²⁴ Cline, Austin. “Karl Marx on Religion as the Opium of the People.” Learn Religions, Sep. 10, 2021, learnreligions.com/karl-marx-on-religion-251019.

²⁵ Cirraen War (First [Recorded] Sacred War): Src: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Sacred_War

²⁶ Judaism and Violence: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaism_and_violence

Throughout history, Christianity has been linked with religious violence, from the Crusades and the Inquisition to the oppression of minorities.²⁷ Recently, extremist Christian groups have been connected with anti-abortion violence, anti-LGBTQ+ laws, support of white nationalist movements, and the violation of the separation of Church and State.

Islam too has been associated with extremist movements such as ISIS and al-Qaeda, who use violence to promote their vision of a pure Islamic state.²⁸ However, it is important to note that the vast majority of Muslims reject these extremist views and practice a peaceful, tolerant form of Islam. The history of the extremism of the Abrahamic religions provides ample evidence of the dangers of religious extremism and the importance of promoting tolerance, understanding, and dialogue across different faiths and cultures.

All modern forms of Buddhism, since the ending of the Councils, have a long history, spanning some 1,500 years, has had its share of conflicts and controversies. However, compared to the Abrahamic religions, the historical record of violence and extremism in all forms of Buddhism is nearly non-existent. Of course, there have been instances of violence committed by individuals or groups *claiming to act in the name of Buddhism*, such as in Sri Lanka and Myanmar, where Buddhist nationalist groups have been involved in ethnic and religious conflicts. However, these instances are widely regarded as departures from the core teachings and values of the Buddha, which emphasize non-violence, compassion, and the alleviation of suffering.

Modern Buddhism's relationship with violence is complex. While the Buddha taught non-violence and compassion, there have been debates throughout Buddhist history regarding the ethics of violence. However, most modern Buddhists agree that violence is not a solution to human problems and that peaceful means should be sought whenever possible. Although modern Buddhism has not been entirely free of extremism and violence, the historical record indicates that such occurrences are uncommon and are not representative of the Buddha's core teachings and values.

The Panna Foundation for Dhamma Studies survey found that all participants held a negative view of organized religion, despite having attended religious services in the past. Respondents saw religious services as focused on entertainment rather than solutions to personal issues or a deeper understanding of life's challenges. This consensus has only grown over time, with respondents agreeing that religion fails to address the root causes of pain and suffering. Given this negative view of organized religion, why would a Buddhist want to or agree to align with such a social consensus? That is the core of the question, which asks for an answer given the essence of the meaning and purpose of the Dhamma.

²⁷ Christianity and Violence: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_and_violence

²⁸ Islam and Violence: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_and_violence

Semantics or Not?

Linguistics is the field that investigates meaning through, among several things, the study of *semantics*.²⁹ It encompasses the examination of how words and ideas are connected, as well as the examination of the various levels of meaning that exist within a language, like the concrete and metaphorical interpretations of words. Additionally, semantics also delves into the examination of the meaning of linguistic expressions, which can be influenced by various factors, such as *the situation in which they are communicated or written*. Linguistics is not solely the study of semantics, but rather the study of language and its structure, including grammar, syntax, phonetics, and semantics. Semantics is the branch of linguistics that deals with the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences. It focuses on how words and sentences convey meaning and how people interpret and understand language. Semantics examines the relationships between words and their referents, as well as how words can have multiple meanings and how context can affect meaning.

For example, the word "bank" can refer to a financial institution, the edge of a river, or a place where a plane tilts to turn. The meaning of "bank" depends on the context in which it is used, and this is the subject of study for semantics.

The roots of the word "religion" can be traced back to the Latin word "*religare*," meaning "to bind together." This ancient concept may have once been applicable to those who followed the Buddha, but the modern conventional understanding and meaning of religion does not align with the teachings or practices of the Buddha's original Dhamma. The current definition of religion is incompatible with the Buddha's original Dhamma, and a person who understands this would rightfully be hesitant to impose this modern label on the practices of those who follow it.³⁰ Followers in the Buddha's time did not become followers to satisfy blind faith nor to comply with social norms, for cultural or political reasons.

It's important to recognize the distinctions between the Buddha's original Dhamma and religion. These differences extend beyond just their doctrines and dogmas, but also in their intended purpose. Nowadays, there are negative connotations linked with religion, making it even more important to understand these differences. Classifying the Dhamma as a religion based solely on cultural norms, traditions, or political motives would misrepresent the Buddha's teachings. Such labeling demonstrates narrow-minded thinking and fail to capture the true essence of the Dhamma.

²⁹ Semantics: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semantics#Linguistics>

³⁰ Followers of the Buddha & the Dhamma: upasaka (lay person), bhikkhu (male monk), bhikkhuni (female monk), ācariya (teacher).

If the Buddha were alive today and a Brahman priest approached him with the questions: "Is it more important to be politically correct or to achieve liberation from suffering? Is it more important to follow traditions or to achieve liberation from suffering? Is it more important to live according to societal norms or to achieve liberation from suffering?" The Pali texts reveals that the emphasis squarely rests on the importance of liberation from suffering over societal norms, traditions, and political correctness. The Buddha taught that attachment to cultural norms, traditions, and societal expectations can be a source of suffering and hinder one's progress towards enlightenment. It is necessary to differentiate the Buddha's teachings from the negative connotations associated with the word "religion" in contemporary times.

Therefore, the priorities outlined in these questions aligns with the core teachings of the Buddha's Dhamma, which stress the primacy of achieving liberation from suffering over adherence to cultural norms, traditions, and political correctness. The Buddha recognized that attachment to societal conventions can be a source of suffering, as it obstructs the path towards enlightenment. A reclassification of the Buddha's teachings away from the negative connotations commonly associated with "religion" is appropriate in this modern era. However, such a shift is unlikely to occur due to the pervasive power of societal conventions, beliefs, and consensus.

In the book "*Life Examined: Lessons in Buddhist Philosophy*," the late Madawela Punnañi Thera outlines four levels of practice that he identifies as common across all religions: devotion, discipline, purification of the mind, and realization of truth. While I find some of Punnañi's perceptions to be insightful, his inclusion of "all religion" is overly simplistic and not widely accepted or understood by members and clergy of faith-based religions.

Drawing from my own direct experiences with various Christian denominations, I contend that concepts such as *citta visuddhi* (purification of mind), *bhavana* (meditation), *bhakti/pasāda* (devotion), *sila* (discipline), and *sacca-sambojjhanga* (realization of truth) are not known by members and clergy of these religions. Considering the conventional meaning of these English words, which have been translated to the nearest approximation to describe the concepts behind these Pali words, there exists a chasm of difference as to the scope and immense depth of behind these Pali words. While devotion, worship, prayer, and following commandments are familiar concepts within faith-based religions, the focus on purifying the mind and cultivating positive mental states is rarely, if ever, emphasized. Also, the concepts inured to these Pali words used by the Buddha are not known nor are ever taught by faith-based clergy. Moreover, the purpose of Dhamma practice is also connected to the concepts behind these Pali words, which is to achieve mental development through the purification of the mind. This differs significantly from the goals of faith-based religions.

This is particularly evident with regard to Bhante Punjabi's perspective on "Ultimate Reality" (*paramattha dhamma*), which would certainly be a subject for semantic examination considering that the value and meaning of such a phrase within the doctrines of faith-based religions varies from sect to sect and is entirely opposite from a Dhamma perspective. Although some religious groups may touch upon these topics in relation to god worship, I can state with certainty: None of the teachings in faith-based religions focus on the concept of "Ultimate Reality," which Bhante Punjabi refers. Few faith-based religions put any emphasis on personal experience, aside from perhaps the mysticism surrounding external rituals and concepts, such as prayer, heaven, judgment, hell, worship of a supernatural entity, and the soul.

In the Pali language, the phrase for ultimate reality is "*paramattha dhamma*". "Paramattha" means "ultimate" or "supreme", while "dhamma" refers to the nature of reality itself. The phrase "*paramattha dhamma*" is used by the Buddha to refer to the ultimate nature of things, which is said to be beyond conceptualization or description. It is also sometimes used to contrast with other levels of reality, such as conventional or relative reality (*sammuti-sacca*) and mundane truth (*lokiya-sacca*).

The phrase "ultimate reality" has various meanings within different faith-based religions. In Christianity, the concept of ultimate reality often refers to God, who is considered the ultimate and absolute reality that transcends the physical world. God is seen as the creator of the universe and the source of all existence, and is often described in terms of divine attributes such as omniscience, omnipotence, and omnibenevolence.

In Islam, ultimate reality is typically understood as the oneness of Allah (God) and the fundamental nature of reality as subservient to His will. This understanding is often expressed in the Islamic doctrine of *tawhid*,³¹ which emphasizes the unity and singularity of God as the ultimate reality and source of all creation.

In Hinduism, the concept of ultimate reality is known as Brahman, which is understood as the ultimate, unchanging reality that underlies and encompasses all of existence. Brahman is often described in terms of non-dualism (*advaita*),³² in which all apparent differences and distinctions between things are seen as illusory and ultimately unreal.

In Buddhism, the concept of ultimate reality is often expressed in terms of emptiness (*suññatā*) or the absence of inherent existence. This refers to the understanding that all phenomena, including the self, lack any inherent or independent existence and are instead interdependent and conditioned by other factors. The ultimate reality is seen as beyond conceptualization or description, and is often referred to as *suchness* or the nature of reality itself.

³¹ Tawhid: <https://www.learnreligions.com/tawhid-2004294>

³² Advaita: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Advaita-school-of-Hindu-philosophy>

In the Dhamma, the concept of "suchness" (*tathata* in Pali) refers to the nature of reality as it truly is, *beyond* conceptualization and the *distortions of perception and thought*. Suchness is sometimes described as the ultimate or absolute reality, which underlies and encompasses all of existence. It is also often associated with the concept of emptiness (*suññatā*), in which all phenomena lack inherent or independent existence and are instead interdependent and conditioned by other factors. The understanding of suchness is a key aspect of wisdom and the path to liberation from suffering.

By seeing things as they truly are, without being caught up in delusion, attachment, ignorance or aversion, one can gain insight into the nature of reality and the impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and non-self of all phenomena. This understanding leads one to a sense of profound peace and freedom from suffering, known as Nibbana, enlightenment (*bodhi*) or awakening (*bodhi*).

In modern conventional meaning (*lokiya-sacca*), "ultimate reality" refers to the fundamental, underlying nature of existence that is the source of all reality and experience. It is often associated with concepts such as metaphysics, ontology, and epistemology, and is used to explore questions about the nature of reality, the self, and the universe as a whole. In Western philosophy, ultimate reality is often associated with concepts such as God, the absolute, or the universe as a whole.

If Bhante Punnaji's list is representative of elements that are found in all religions, and these are believed to be reflective also of Buddhism, then why do the results of the doctrines and practices of theistic, faith-based religions fall short in comparison to the Dhamma? Wouldn't there exist more overlapping of results? If such were the case, which is observable not, wouldn't one be able to observe the same results? Theistic religions are often observed only to contribute to division and conflict among individuals and societies. If these similarities can be seen in all religions, what is the evidence to support this claim? If theistic religions were effective, why is this not more evident, especially when the results of Dhamma practice is so different than those of theistic, faith-based religions. Someone well-versed in the Dhamma would easily be able to observe these things.

Although I hold Bhante Punnaji in high regard for his wisdom and insight, I question his knowledge and understanding of theistic religious practices and doctrines. While he may have an intellectual understanding of the similarities between Buddhism and theistic religions, he was not actively involved in the practices of any theistic religion, therefore his perspective lacks depth and nuance. His limited understanding based on intellectual knowledge alone cannot provide a comprehensive understanding of the comparison between the Dhamma and theistic religions.

Talk the Talk & Walk the Walk

The phrase "walk the walk, not just talk the talk" is often associated with faith-based religions. Historically there is little evidence that the "talk" of the faith-based religions leads to actual substantive or positive results. Doctrine and dogma are one thing when they are read and taught, but remain only words if there is a disconnect between what is written or taught and what is practiced? If one can find no practical value to doctrine or dogma, of what use is it for the purpose of solving one's suffering? A question, I suspect, that the Buddha also contemplated. If beliefs and teachings are not put into practice and do not bring meaningful change to the individual, can there really be any value with regard to solving the problem of suffering from a personal standpoint? Since it is a statistical fact that faith-based religions are on the decline, how is one to view their doctrines regarding value for finding solutions of the human condition of suffering? This certainly invites more questions.

Can the message of the faith-based religions be genuine? If there is no observable or testable evidence of the benefits of these religions, is there any validity to the claim that they share similarities with the teachings of the Buddha? On the other hand, if there is no visible impact from the practice of an adulterated form of Buddhism in bringing clarity of purpose or resolving individual suffering, these questions can also be applied to modern-day forms of Buddhism.

One might expect that there would be a clear and positive consensus regarding the observable results of following a faith-based religion. Surely any teaching that purports to improve human life would have a pattern of effectiveness. If the prescribed worship is authentic, it should result in observable results for the individual worshipers and for the majority of practitioners. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The attempt to equate Buddhism with these allegedly observable theistic faith-based practices is misguided and detrimental to the preservation of the original teachings of the Buddha.

The teachings of the Buddha places importance on the embodying of the Dhamma and recognizing the difference between true practitioners of Buddhism and those who merely pay homage to cultural traditions. Similarly, this highlights the misconception found in faith-based religions that acceptance of a divine being is sufficient for salvation, without living up to the doctrines of the supernatural entity.

In a sense, the Dhamma underscores the significance of experiential knowledge and practice in recognizing genuine practitioners of the Dhamma. Those who have gained a deep understanding of the Buddha's teachings through practice can discern the difference between those who are truly immersed in the Dhamma and those who are superficially associated with some form of Buddhism. The term "Buddhist" is often misused by individuals who pay homage to cultural traditions rather than adhering to the original principles set forth in the Buddha's teachings. This trend is particularly evident among Mahayanist lay-persons.

Many members of faith-based religions believe that simply accepting a divine being is enough to be saved, without following the supernatural entity's teachings. However, this is not true. To truly accept a divine being, one must also follow their teachings in daily life. This is also true in Buddhism. Just calling oneself a Buddhist does not make one a true follower of the Buddha's teachings, which aim to help people develop a mental awakening to the truth about the nature of existence.

People who are educated and knowledgeable in the Dhamma can easily tell the difference between those who truly practice and those who just claim to. Those who have experienced the Four Noble Truths can recognize people who say they are Buddhists but do not really act like it. These "Buddhists-in-name-only" may say they have the same faith as people in other religions, like Catholicism, Judaism, or Islam, but their actions do not match up with what they say they believe.

Some religions have a problem where people think that just recognizing a higher power, like God, Jesus, or Allah, is enough to be saved. This is a mistaken idea that causes people to claim things they cannot support. For example, someone might say, "I believe in Jesus, so I will be saved," without actually following Jesus's teachings in their life. To truly accept Jesus, or the Buddha, one must not only acknowledge their teachings but also live according to them. Simply saying one is a Buddhist does not mean they follow the Dhamma's principles and are a true follower (*upasaka*).

The term "Buddhist" is misunderstood and is disliked by some Dhamma practitioners. The word implies that the Buddha's teachings are a religious system, but this is not accurate. The Buddha's teachings, or Dhamma, are far-reaching and all-encompassing, and cannot be limited to a single, definable form.

To truly follow and practice the Buddha's teachings, one must experience a shift in thinking and understanding, which should be observable in their behavior. Following the Dhamma means striving to embody its principles for the purpose of attaining a mental awakening, just as the Buddha did. This requires a deep understanding of the Dhamma and the practical application of its principles in one's daily life. Declaring oneself a Buddhist without any real practice or understanding of the Dhamma is not meaningful and could be seen as mere entertainment or self-aggrandizement. It is important to remember that the Dhamma is not about division or labeling, but about embracing the reality of one's own existence and making practical changes in one's life to achieve mental development. Therefore, to truly follow the Buddha's teachings, it is essential to go beyond the label of "Buddhist" and instead focus on understanding and practicing the principles of the Dhamma.

Experience is Truth

Within the context of the Buddha's teachings, the phrase "Experience is Truth" could also be stated with the phrase "Direct Experience" (*sakshat-kara*) or "Personal Insight" (*abhinihara*)." This concept of "insight" is embodied in the Pali word *vipassana*, which literally means "clear seeing." According to the Buddha's teachings, one can only truly understand the nature of reality by directly experiencing it for oneself, rather than relying on the words or teachings of others. This direct experience or "clear seeing," involves observing the material world, and one's own mind and body in a non-judgmental way. Therefore, "Experience is Truth" can be seen as an assertion that true understanding comes from personal insight, rather than simply accepting the beliefs of others. In other words, one must develop their own experiential knowledge to truly know the truth of a matter.

Another way to understand this phrase is in terms of the concept of impermanence or "*anicca*." The Buddha taught that all phenomena are constantly changing and are in a state of flux. Thus, any conventional concept or intellectual understanding of reality is inherently flawed because it is based on fixed ideas or concepts, which are illusory in nature. Therefore, "Experience is Truth" can be seen as a statement that truth can only be known through direct experience because only through experience can one see the constantly changing nature of reality and gain a deeper understanding of it.

In essence, "Experience is Truth" is an invitation to cultivate personal experience and insight in order to develop a deeper understanding of the nature of reality. By doing so, one comes to see the impermanence and interconnectedness of all things, while gaining a "clear seeing" along with a greater appreciation for each moment that we are alive.

Through my own journey with the Dhamma, I have come to have an unshakeable confidence that the following concept is true: True knowledge about all aspects of life can only be gained through direct experience. If this were not the case, what would be the alternative to direct personal insight? I have already experienced that "faith" cannot provide such insight. After some 35 years of involvement in various theistic faith-based religions, I can confidently say that none of them was capable of providing an understanding of the causes and effects behind the issues that affect my own life, let alone those of all of humankind. In fact, my experiences with faith-based religions added to my confusion and left me with more questions than answers. Some of this is attributable to the plethora of conflicting doctrines and dogmas of faith-based religion.

Despite years of dedication to theistic faith-based religions, I was unable to find answers to fundamental questions such as the purpose of suffering and death. In contrast, the Four Noble Truths provided a clear (clear seeing-*suddhaditthi*) perspective on the human condition and offered answers to the questions I was seeking. Conversely, my experiences with theistic faith-based religions demonstrated to me their inability to address these issues.

My background with faith-based religions is rather extensive, which includes an academic level of study of various doctrine-oriented texts of many ancient versions of the Bible, such as the Codex Sinaiticus, Masoretic texts, the Nag Hamadi texts, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Vatican 1209 Manuscript. My archaeological studies led me into the training of various forms of ancient cuneiform, Greek koine, Latin, Hebrew and Aramaic. Additionally, my studies included the writings of various Church fathers such as Saint Thomas Aquinas, Origen of Alexandria, Saint Athanasius, Saint John Chrysostom, Saint Basil the Great, and Saint Gregory of Nyssa. Coupled with the knowledge and practice of the Dhamma, my background has uniquely provided me with a very broad perspective of the truth about the nature of reality.

Good is Good, Bad is Bad

As recorded in the *Anguttara Nikaya* (2.34), the Buddha defines what is good and bad based on one's actual experience. He states that something is either good or bad, with no gray area in between. The determining factors between good and bad, according to the Buddha's teachings, can be found in the Sutta mentioned above.

"I teach doing and not doing. Doing what is good and not doing what is bad. Whatever leads to happiness is good, and whatever leads to unhappiness is bad."

When asked whether or not he agreed with wise people in the World regarding what is good and what is bad, Buddha replied:

"Yes. Whatever the wise people regard as good, I also regard as good. What the wise people regard as bad, I also agree."

In this passage, the Buddha is speaking to the Kalama people and is explaining his own approach to discerning what is good and what is bad. The Buddha is saying that he agrees with what the wise people regard as good or bad, not because of public consensus or the opinions of individuals he considered wise, but rather because those things align with his own understanding of what leads to happiness and the ultimate goal of ending one's suffering. He is not suggesting blind obedience, but rather encouraging individuals to use their own intelligence and discernment to determine what is good and what is bad. He is saying that when he encounters teachings or actions that are in line with his own understanding of what things lead to the ultimate goal, he will agree with them, whether those teachings or actions come from "wise people" or not. In essence, the Buddha is stating that he agrees with the wise people because their teachings align with his own understanding of what is good and what is bad. He is not saying that the opinions of the wise people are the only measure of what is good or bad, but rather that he is using his own discernment to determine the truth of a matter.

Who are the Wise Ones?

A staggering 78% majority of people, according to a 2021 Gallup Poll, believe that religion has lost its effectiveness, usefulness, and is generally considered negatively. This raises the question: Does not this majority fit the definition of "wise people" as stated by the Buddha? If something is considered to be "good" it should align with the Buddha's teachings, and if it is "good" according to the Dhamma then all who agree with what the Buddha considered to be "good" are wise. After all, is not the understanding of the 78% that religion is ineffective based on their direct experience based on wisdom generated from direct experience?

Gallup Religion Poll 2021

At the present time, do you think religion as a whole is increasing its influence on American life or losing its influence?

	Increasing its influence	Losing its influence	Same (vol.)
	%	%	%
2021	21	78	1
2020	33	64	2

The Buddha's teachings on *mettā*, friendliness and non-discrimination between oneself and others, suggests that his wisdom was intended for all, not just a select group of highly educated individuals. Historically, the influence of religion has been declining, with only 16% of Americans believing it is gaining influence in 2022, which is a record low. Trends of decreasing religious influence has been noted by Gallup for nearly 60 years.³³

This 2021 Gallup Poll results reveal a widespread consensus among a representative sample of the US population that religion is losing its effectiveness and value. This consensus is supported by the increasing negative perception of religion in the US. The poll does not single out any specific religion but rather highlights the general trend in the country. There must be a logical and plausible explanation behind this trend. My assertion is that religion, in its contemporary understanding, has failed to provide solutions to the complexities of the human condition, leading to an overall negative experience. I believe that this assertion is a plausible explanation for the trend of decreasing effectiveness and value of religion in the US from a philosophical and sociological standpoint, but there are several factors that could contribute to this trend. One factor is the increasing secularization of society, which has led to a decline in the influence of religion on people's lives. As society becomes more diverse, individuals are exposed to a range of beliefs and practices, and may be less likely to rely on a single religious tradition to guide their lives.

³³ **Gallup Religion Poll:** Src: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/1690/religion.aspx>

Another factor is the increasing awareness of the shortcomings and abuses within religious institutions, which has led to a loss of trust and faith in organized faith-based religion. Instances of clergy abuse, financial impropriety, political violence, and other scandals have tarnished the reputation of religion and undermined its perceived value. Additionally, as society becomes more globalized and interconnected, people are exposed to a range of cultures and belief systems, which, I believe, leads to a questioning of the exclusivity of any one religious' tradition. This, again I believe, has resulted in a more pluralistic approach to spirituality, which values individual experience and personal growth over dogmatic adherence to a single religious tradition.

From a philosophical standpoint, the assertion that religion has failed to provide solutions to the complexities of the human condition is also supported by the notion that religion may be limited in its ability to address the complex and evolving needs of society. As our understanding of the world changes, new challenges arise, and traditional religious frameworks seem to struggle to keep pace with these changes.

Therefore, my assertion that the declining effectiveness and value of religion in the US and Europe may be due to its failure to provide solutions to the complexities of the human condition, supported by both sociological and philosophical perspectives, is a plausible explanation.

Given this negative consensus, why would a practitioner of Buddha's teachings choose to align themselves with a declining religious system? The teachings of the Buddha are highly distinct from those of faith-based religions and should not be associated with them. The notion of linking the enlightened philosophy of Buddha with the notions of failing religions should really be avoided.



Former Catholic Church for Sale

Former Mormon Church for Sale

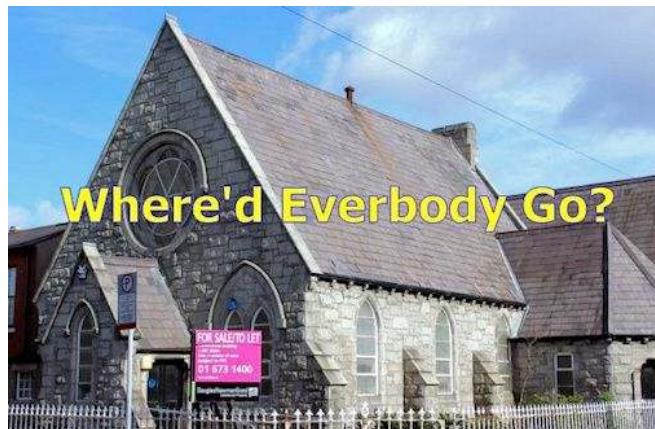
Can there be any more convincing evidence of the decline of faith-based religions as the abundance of unused and unoccupied churches around the world. From the US to Europe, there are countless churches available for sale.³⁴ According to a report in The Guardian on 22 January 2023, there were 4,500 Protestant churches that closed in the US in 2019, the latest year for which data is available.

34 Abandoned Churches in Europe:

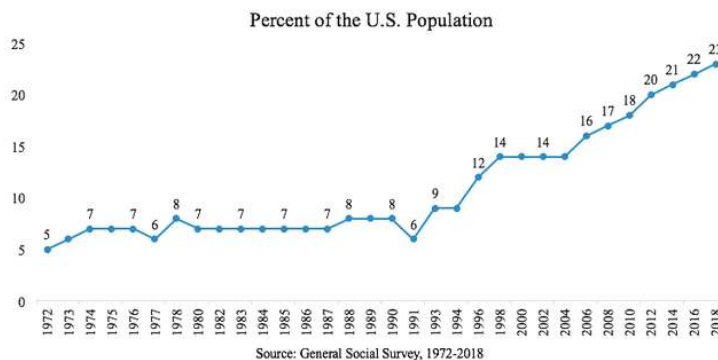
<https://duckduckgo.com/?q=abandoned+churches+for+sale+in+Europe&t=ffab&atb=v348-1&iar=images&iax=images&ia=images>

The same article cites a study by Pew Research, which found that the number of Americans identifying as Christian was 64% in 2020, with 30% of the US population being classified as having no religious affiliation. In 1972, 92% of Americans considered themselves Christian, but by 2070, that number is expected to fall below 50%, with the number of "religiously unaffiliated" Americans outnumbering those who identify as Christian. This reveals that the closure of churches and declining attendance of followers is a growing trend, resulting in many abandoned houses of worship.³⁵

A study reported that from the decade ending in 2020, 75 to 150 congregations closed per week in the United States, with projections suggesting that the number will increase in the next five years. This has led to a surplus of church buildings available for sale. Real estate companies, specializing in church sales, report a significant increase in sales over the past ten years. The trend of declining religious affiliation is not limited to the United States, as reported in an article in the Atlantic magazine.



Accelerating growth of the unaffiliated, 1972-2016



35 Abandoned Churches for Sale in Europe:

<https://duckduckgo.com/?q=abandoned+churches+for+sale+in+Europe&t=ffab&atb=v348-1&ia=web>

Brian Dolehide, managing director of AD Advisors, a real estate company specializing in church sales, said the last 10 years has seen a spike in church sales.³⁶ In a related article, published in the Atlantic magazine, reports much of the same decline in religious affiliation in the United States.

*“Stubbornly pious Americans threw a wrench in the secularization thesis. Deep into the 20th century, more than nine in 10 Americans said they believed in God and belonged to an organized religion, with the great majority of them calling themselves Christian. That number held steady—through the sexual-revolution of the 1960s, through the rootless and anxioius[ness] of the 19’70s, and through the “greed is good” era of the 1980s. But, in the early 1990s, the historical tether between American identity and faith snapped. Religious non-affiliation in the U.S. started to rise—and rise, and rise. By the early 2000s, the share of Americans who said they didn’t associate with any established religion (also known as “nones”) had doubled. By the 2010s, this grab bag of atheists, agnostics, and spiritual dabblers had tripled in size.” -Derek Thompson*³⁷

In the same article, Derek Thompson also stated:

“Reconciling the overwhelming sense of life’s importance with the universe’s ostensible indifference to human suffering is hard. Although belief in God is no panacea for these problems, religion is more than a theism. It is a bundle: a theory of the world, a community, a social identity, a means of finding peace and purpose, and a weekly routine. Those, like me, who have largely rejected this package deal, often find themselves shopping à la carte for meaning, community, and routine to fill a faith-shaped void. Their politics is a religion. Their work is a religion. Their spin class is a church. And not looking at their phone for several consecutive hours is a Sabbath.”

Believing in one's own correctness without factual evidence for the efficacy of faith-based religion, including the modern perception of Buddhism, is a form of delusion. It is possible that those who consider Buddhism to be a religion and cling to their views, while discounting any other view including the Buddha's, may also be deluded. The negative perception of religion among hundreds of thousands, even millions of people in polls and studies, reflects the fact that traditional faith-based religions have been perceived as ineffective in addressing individual suffering. However, as a general observation, those who learn and practice the Dhamma do not experience this negativity.

36 <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/jan/22/us-churches-closing-religion-covid-christianity>

37 Three Decades Ago, America Lost Its Religion. Why? Atlantic Magazine, 26 September 2019, Thompson, Derek <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/09/atheism-fastest-growing-religion-us/598843/>

Consequences and Ethics

Buddha's teachings on the consequences of actions (*vipaka vada*) can be found in the *Majjhima Nikaya* 14 and 101. In this sutta, the Buddha places emphasis on the moral quality of actions, rather than punishment for non-compliance with religious rules. The Buddha's teachings stress the importance of ethics, specifically the importance of thinking and doing good, good being measured by what is beneficial toward a state of happiness and ending suffering, in contrast to theist faith-based religions which focus on punishment for disobedience. For the Buddha, the focus is on one's volition and the harm that results from negative intentions, rather than solely on the consequences of actions.

Although the well-known Christian principle of "*treating others as you wish to be treated*,"³⁸ is widely recognized, it appears to have limited impact on the actions of individuals participating in faith-based religions. This faith often leads to divisions and separations from others in the world, reinforcing the belief that their own religion is the only correct one, with all others facing the consequences of judgement and eternal damnation from the one and the same single God they all claim to know.

In faith-based religions, belief is the primary factor, as adherence to its doctrines defines one's beliefs and formalizes membership through declaration of faith. These doctrines dictate the actions of adherents, but do little to address the most important problems of human existence. Rather, the focus is centered on avoiding punishment at the hands of a supernatural entity. This leaves no room for personal initiative beyond obedience to the dictates of a religion, merely solemnizing behavior without providing a path to either understand the source of suffering or a method for solving it.

In my experience, Judeo-Christian religions are heavily focused on the idea that belief in a higher power requires strict obedience to the rules associated with their denomination. These religious systems offered limited assistance in addressing the difficulties of life and provided a lackluster explanation, or none at all, for death or the cause of human suffering. This is in direct contrast to the Buddha Dhamma. Buddha taught a non-judgmental, inclusive personal approach and encouraged people to be understanding towards others who may have limited knowledge. Given the significance of these topics, one might expect people to seek practical solutions and take corrective action rather than relying solely on faith, which can only bring a sense of hope and longing, or worse, mere wishful thinking (*maññati*).

38 Matthew 7:12 - New American Standard Bible: "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets." Src: https://biblehub.com/nasb_/matthew/7.htm

Religious dogmatism is marked by the belief that one's own religious philosophy is the only correct one. Despite the conventional religious teachings of love, peace, generosity, and so on, that are propounded by the various faith-based religious doctrines,³⁹ their practice throughout history has often resulted in acts of violence, deceit, wars, discrimination, suppression of scientific progress, and discrimination of women, casting doubt on the validity and veracity of their claimed beliefs.

Distinguishing them from the philosophies of faith-based religions, the Buddha's teachings offer practical solutions and explanations that address the fundamental problems of human suffering and death. Emphasizing intention as the source behind human actions, the Buddha revealed a deeper connection between intent and consequence. The centuries of peaceful and non-violent living, demonstrated by those who follow the Buddha's teachings, suggests that his methods are effective, and speaks directly to the veracity of those teachings when it comes to resolving the fundamental issues of human existence.

Wearing the 'Religion' Label: Is There Any Benefit to be Had?

When giving advice to their children, parents often caution against associating with others who have a history of problematic behavior. This is because these people have displayed patterns of negative actions and have gained a bad reputation. If your child were to associate with such individuals, it could lead others, such as law enforcement, to associate them with the misdeeds of those they associate with. This is commonly known as "guilt by association." Even if a person is innocent of any wrongdoing, they can still be implicated if they are found to be in the company of those who have committed a crime or who behave badly. This was the case for many in the Muslim community after 9/11, where they faced increased prejudice and discrimination due to their association with the radical actions of a small group claiming to be followers of Islam. This serves as a reminder of the dangers of guilt by association. In the *Sigolovada Sutta* (9),⁴⁰ the Buddha highlighted the importance of being aware of one's associations.

*"These are the six dangers inherent in roaming the streets at inappropriate times: oneself, one's family, and one's property are all left unguarded and unprotected; **one is suspected** of crimes; then rumors spread; and one is subjected to many miseries. These are the six dangers inherent in **bad companionship**: any rogue, drunkard, addict, cheat, swindler, or thug becomes a friend and colleague. Upon these things the wise reflect; they obtain greatness, and are sources of praise."*

³⁹ Dogma: Definition Src: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dogma>

⁴⁰ *Sigolovada Sutta* (v. 9): Src: <https://accesstosight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.31.0.ksw0.html>

To put it in a similar way, the Buddha warned about the six risks associated with being out on the streets during inappropriate hours, such as leaving oneself, family, and property unguarded and unprotected, facing suspicion of criminal activities, being the subject of rumors, and facing many miseries. He also emphasized the dangers of forming relationships with individuals who engage in negative behaviors, like being a rogue, drunkard, addict, cheat, swindler, or thug. Wise persons reflect on these warnings and strive to obtain good qualities, earning the respect and admiration of others. Wise persons know to avoid bad companionship.

Several places in the Pali texts, the Buddha speaks of developing and using common sense. The phrase meaning common sense is *yoniso manasikara*. He often used this term, which can be translated as "wise attention" or "appropriate attention." This term refers to the ability to discern what is skillful and unskillful in a given situation, and to apply one's attention and effort accordingly. This could be seen as a form of common sense, as it involves using one's wisdom and intelligence to navigate the complexities of daily life.

Similarly, the Buddha often emphasizes the importance of developing "*sati*," or mindfulness, which involves being aware of one's thoughts, emotions, actions and bodily sensations in the present moment. Mindfulness can be seen as a form of common sense, as it allows one to stay grounded and focused on what is happening in the here and now, rather than getting lost in distractions or unhelpful thoughts. Overall, while the Buddha may not use the term "common sense" explicitly, his teachings emphasize the importance of developing wisdom, mindfulness, and discernment, which could be seen as related to the concept of common sense.

While the assumption of guilt by association is a flawed reasoning process that assumes guilt based solely on association with someone or something that is guilty of wrongdoing or improprieties, it remains a common form of prejudice and bias that leads to unfair judgments and discrimination. If a person belongs to a certain group that is associated with negative stereotypes or behaviors, others may assume that the person shares those traits or engages in those behaviors. Similarly, since religion is viewed negatively overall, it would be, of course, ethically unfair to assume that all faith-based religions have no intrinsic value. However, we are not talking strictly in terms of a belief by belief comparison. The focus here is on the 'overall' or 'general' consensus of how religion is viewed.

The concept that a person's character is reflected by those whom they choose to associate with suggests that the people we surround ourselves with can influence our own beliefs, values, and actions, and that our choices of association can provide insight into our own character. This concept suggests that if a person chooses to associate with individuals who have positive qualities such as honesty, integrity, and kindness, it is likely that the person shares these same qualities. On the other hand, if a person chooses to associate with individuals who have negative qualities such as dishonesty, disrespect, and cruelty, it may be assumed that the person shares these same qualities as well.

The idea that a person's character is reflected by their associations is based on the belief that we are influenced by the people around us, and that our relationships can shape our own attitudes and behaviors. This can be a valuable perspective for individuals who are seeking to improve their own character, as it suggests that by choosing to associate with positive individuals, we can become more positive ourselves.

This is the overall standard and foundation for consensus in most of the World and is not confined to just individual people, but is applied to generally understood areas such as religion and politics. While the concept is not always accurate, and ethics requires the avoidance of making assumptions, nevertheless, whenever society as a whole creates a particular consensus about something, the consensus is considered to not only be the standard, but that the consensus is true.

The negative perception of religion in general, as indicated by studies, could harm the reputation of the Buddha's teachings if Buddhism is perceived in the same way as faith-based religions. This could lead to a dismissal of Buddha's teachings without full understanding. Additionally, if Buddhism is seen as just another religion, it may be subject to the same criticisms and biases, which is detrimental to the reputation of the Dhamma. It is important to note that the Buddha's teachings are complex and diverse, and negative perceptions or stereotypes do not accurately represent its practice. Buddhists must provide an accurate representation of the teachings to promote a nuanced understanding of the Dhamma.

Armchair Buddhist Philosophers

What is the intention behind the reasoning that a true follower of the Buddha invites controversy? An "armchair philosopher" engages in philosophical thinking and discussions without any formal training, qualifications or actual experience in the field. It generally implies that the person is an amateur philosopher, who spends their time thinking and talking about philosophical topics from the comfort of their own position, without necessarily engaging in any rigorous academic or scholarly pursuits. The term is generally used negatively, depending on the context. On the one hand, it can suggest a person who is genuinely interested in philosophical ideas and enjoys exploring them in their own time, outside of any formal academic context. On the other hand, it can be used pejoratively to suggest a person who engages in philosophical discussions without any real depth or rigor, and who may be prone to making shallow or uninformed arguments. This phrase is typically used in a somewhat derogatory manner, and suggests that armchair philosophers are overly theoretical or disconnected from reality, and that their ideas are not grounded in practical experience, education, knowledge or application. It is also important to recognize that ideas must be put into practice in order to be truly meaningful and impactful in the world. Philosophers who are able to bridge the gap between theory and practice, and who are able to put their ideas into action, are likely to have a greater impact on the world than those who remain disconnected from reality.

For armchair-philosophers, the Internet has become a cesspool of misinformation, enabling the spread of misinformation and proliferated superficial notions of philosophical concepts, leading to the propagation of shallow and uninformed arguments. Furthermore, the ease of access to information and the lack of formal training leads to a false sense of expertise, resulting in overconfidence and a reluctance to engage in rigorous academic inquiry. Religious armchair-philosophers, in particular, proliferate the internet presenting themselves as having some level of expertise, and so-called Buddhist philosophers are no exception.

Prior to the Internet, philosophical discourse was largely restricted to academic circles and specialized publications, which could be difficult for the general public to access. However, with the advent of the Internet, people now have access to a wealth of philosophical material, including online courses, lectures, podcasts, and discussion forums. This has made it much easier for people to engage with philosophical ideas and explore their own philosophical interests, even if they have no formal training in the field.

Among the greatest philosophers of all time is the Buddha. Buddha's awakening resulted in extremely rigorous contemplation and direct experience, which resulted in his authority to teach others the truth about the nature of reality. The Buddha's philosophy shares many things with some of the other world's great philosophers. With regard to Metaphysics: The Buddha's teachings on the nature of reality, particularly the concepts of impermanence and non-self, share some similarities with the views of philosophers like Nietzsche and Sartre, who also questioned traditional notions of selfhood and the nature of existence. With regard to Ethics: The Buddha's emphasis on the importance of compassion, mindfulness, and non-violence, as well as his teachings on the nature of suffering and the pursuit of happiness, share some similarities with the ethical theories of Plato and Kant. With regard to Epistemology: The Buddha's emphasis on the importance of direct experience and personal inquiry, as well as his critiques of dogmatism and blind faith, share some similarities with the epistemological views of philosophers like Kant and Sartre.

Buddhist armchair-philosophers compare Buddhism to other faiths, but often lack practical knowledge and understanding of not only the Dhamma, but also of the very faith-based religions used in their comparison. Many people identify themselves as Buddhists on the Internet, while claiming membership in various faith-based religions with little to no firsthand experience of either. Without the knowledge gained from a practical understanding of the Dhamma, such Buddhist armchair philosophers have only a faint idea of the differences between the original teachings of the Buddha and the form of Buddhism in which they may participate, assuming, as it were, that the form of Buddhism in which they participate completely aligns with the original teachings of the Buddha. Many modern forms of Buddhism do not align with the original teachings of the Buddha, specifically with regard to personality-cults, veneration of saints, ceremonies and rituals, as-well-as a promotion of the teachings of ancient Buddhists over those of the Buddha.

A few Buddhist armchair-philosophers have even written and published books and Internet articles, the content of which reveals a very unsophisticated and immature perspective, positing ideas that appear like fact, but are replete with many generalities about the Buddha and his teachings devoid of any serious ontological examination.⁴¹ While the average individual need not go to such lengths of conducting their own ontological examination, someone who represents themselves as an authority or someone claiming to have more knowledge than others, according to the rules of ethics and standards, their work must be held to a higher degree of accuracy, and at the very least represent what the Buddha originally taught.

The idea that people with specialized knowledge, skills, or expertise bear greater responsibility is based on the belief that they increase their ability to impact the welfare of society through their actions. Therefore, we anticipate that they will behave in accordance with ethical principles. Furthermore, individuals who assert that they possess superior knowledge compared to their audience are held to an even higher ethical standard. It is crucial that Dhamma philosophy is represented accurately, with due respect to the roots of the Dhamma resting at the feet of the Buddha himself. Any attempt to deviate from this representation, especially by self-proclaimed Buddhist philosophers, risks casting a negative light on the very essence of the Dhamma.

Making unfounded claims that Buddhism is no less a religion than any of the faith-based religions of the world, not only represents an intrinsic ignorance of the Dhamma, but undermines the very purpose of the teachings. Such a deviation from the true teachings of the Dhamma is not only wrong, but it also calls into question the integrity and credibility of those who make such claims. As such, it is of utmost importance that those who claim to represent Buddhism do so accurately and with due respect for its purpose.

The internet has provided a platform for diverse voices and perspectives, making it easier than ever to engage in philosophical religious discussions. However, it is essential to approach these discussions with a critical eye and an open mind. We must consider the source of information and the experience of those sharing their opinions, especially in complex and sensitive topics like the philosophy of religion. While such discussions can be enlightening and enriching, we would do well to limit our ideas to practical experience and remain receptive to learning from diverse perspectives. One of the key benefits of implementing the Buddha's teachings is the cultivation of deep introspection and the shifting of one's focus away from worldly concerns towards inner peace and well-being. This practice, known as *satipatthana*⁴² enables individuals to comprehend the sources of their suffering and develop strategies to overcome them.

⁴¹ Is Buddhism a Religion or a Philosophy? Peto, Alan, <https://alanpeto.com/buddhism/buddhism-religion-philosophy/>

⁴² Satipatthana; (Meaning) "Application of mindfulness." Src: <https://puredhamma.net/sutta-interpretations/maha-satipatthana-sutta/satipatthana-introduction/>

In contrast, many faith-based religions adopt a rigid and ritualistic approach to member behavior, which prioritizes following organizational rules over an individual's mental and emotional well-being. This can lead to a narrow and unchanging perspective that disregards the distinction between fact and value. Such a perspective is often limiting and is ultimately detrimental to personal mental growth and development. As such, it is essential to maintain an open mind when engaging in philosophical religious discussions, especially in today's interconnected and diverse world. By doing so, we can develop a more nuanced and informed understanding of the world around us and cultivate a greater sense of empathy and understanding towards others.

Religious structures in faith-based systems prioritize strict conformity to specific beliefs and practices, regardless of the mental and emotional well-being of the individual. Religions are governed by appointed leaders who ensure the proper execution of these practices. The teachings of the Buddha, however, do not dictate or promote such strict adherence to a prescribed set of institutional or dogmatic practices. The purpose of the Sangha, the Dhamma community, is not to perpetuate the structure of the organization, but to provide a source for the study and practice of the Dhamma. The Sangha is not the end goal, but rather a means to an end - the liberation of the individual from suffering.

Religion is Not a Naturally Occurring Element of Nature

Religion is not a naturally occurring phenomenon or element of nature, and yet the Dhamma is just that. Religion, its concepts, doctrines and forms are human creations. Many of the philosophers mentioned earlier are the cornerstones of World culture, particularly in the West. Almost every facet of life has been influenced by these great thinkers. The Buddha is among them. Although it might be considered a bold statement, I contend that the Buddha could be considered the progenitor of all of them. In contrast, while religion is not a naturally occurring element of phenomenal existence, the dhammā is. The Buddha revealed the truth of the natural existence of dhammā. Remember, *dhammā* refers to the individual elements or factors that make up the world of experience. These elements can be physical, mental, or material, and they are seen as impermanent, interdependent, and without a self or essence. The dhammās are thought to be *the fundamental constituents of reality*.

Philosophers who have had the greatest impact on Western culture are Plato, Immanuel Kant, Michele Foucault, Jean-Paul Sartre, Fredrich Nietzsche, and Bertrand Russell. For example:

- **Plato:** Plato's philosophy has had a profound influence on Western ideas and culture, particularly in the areas of ethics, politics, and metaphysics. His emphasis on the importance of reason, truth, and justice has shaped our understanding of the role of philosophy in society and the importance of intellectual inquiry.

- **Kant:** Kant's philosophy has had a significant impact on modern thought, particularly in the areas of ethics, epistemology, religion and metaphysics. His emphasis on the importance of reason, autonomy, and moral law, has shaped our understanding of human dignity and the principles of liberal democracy.
- **Sartre:** Sartre's existentialist philosophy has had a significant impact on modern culture, particularly in the areas of literature, art, and politics. His emphasis on the importance of individual freedom, authenticity, and responsibility has shaped our understanding of personal identity and the role of the individual in society.
- **Nietzsche:** Nietzsche's philosophy has had a significant impact on modern thought, particularly in the areas of ethics, metaphysics, and cultural critique. His emphasis on the importance of self-overcoming, creativity, and the will to power has shaped our understanding of the roles of religion, individualism, nihilism, and the challenges of modernity.
- **Foucault:** Foucault's philosophy has had a significant impact on modern political theory and cultural studies, including religion, particularly in the areas of power, knowledge, and subjectivity. His emphasis on the importance of discursive practices, power relations, and the social construction of identity has shaped our understanding of the ways in which social institutions and cultural practices shape our lives and experiences.
- **Russell:** He made significant contributions to the field of logic, particularly in the areas of set theory, mathematical logic, and the philosophy of language. His work helped to lay the foundation for modern logic, which has had a significant impact on mathematics, computer science, and philosophy. Russell was one of the founders of the analytic tradition in philosophy, which emphasizes the use of logical analysis and precise language in philosophical inquiry. His work helped to shape the development of analytic philosophy, which has had a significant impact on the discipline of philosophy and on other fields such as linguistics, psychology, and cognitive science. Russell was a strong advocate for education, and his writings on the importance of critical thinking and rational inquiry have had a significant impact on educational philosophy and practice. His work helped to inspire the development of critical thinking skills in education and has had a lasting influence on the ways in which we think about teaching, learning and religion.

Overall, these philosophers have had a significant impact on Western culture, politics and religion by challenging conventional ideas, offering new ways of thinking about *the nature of reality*, the role of the individual in society, and the principles that underpin our political and social institutions. Their ideas continue to shape our understanding of the world and our place in it to this day.

There are four cornerstone areas that are essential to any philosophical inquiry. These four are, epistemology, ethics, power and discourse, language and meaning. The philosophers mentioned above have had a profound impact on the nature and process of philosophical inquiry. For example, in the realm of epistemology, philosophers like Plato and Kant were concerned with understanding the nature of knowledge and how we come to know things. Their work helped to shape the development of epistemology as a branch of philosophy, which has had a significant impact on fields such as psychology, cognitive science, and artificial intelligence.

In the realm of ethics, philosophers like Nietzsche and Sartre were concerned with understanding the nature of morality and how we ought to live our lives. Their work helped to shape the development of ethical theory and has had a significant impact on fields such as psychology, sociology, and political science.

Of equal importance is the realm of power and discourse. Philosophers like Foucault were concerned with understanding the ways in which power operates in society and shapes our experiences and subjectivities. His work helped to shape the development of critical theory, which has had a significant impact on fields such as cultural, religious, media, and gender studies.

With regard to language and meaning, philosophers like Russell were concerned with understanding the nature of language and how we use it to communicate meaning. Their work helped to shape the development of philosophy of language, which has had a significant impact on fields such as linguistics, computer science, religion, and communication studies.

Again, the ideas put forth by these philosophers are literally the foundation and cornerstone of nearly every aspect of Western culture and society. It is very likely that these philosophers would disagree with the idea that the teachings of the Buddha are a religion. Using the foundational philosophies of these people one can see why this would be probable. For instance, Kant's philosophy emphasized the importance of reason and empirical evidence in the evaluation of beliefs and ideas. The Buddha's teachings on the nature of reality and the causes of suffering could be seen as consistent with this emphasis on reason and empirical evidence, rather than faith or belief in supernatural entities.

Fredrich Nietzsche was critical of traditional religious beliefs and emphasized the importance of individual freedom and self-expression. The Buddha's teachings on the path to liberation from suffering through personal experience and inquiry could be seen as consistent with Nietzsche's emphasis on individualism and self-realization. Similarly, Sartre was critical of traditional religious beliefs and emphasized the importance of individual freedom and responsibility. The Buddha's teachings on the nature of reality and the path to liberation from suffering through personal responsibility could be seen as consistent with Sartre's emphasis on individual autonomy.

Plato's philosophy emphasized the importance of reason and inquiry in the search for truth and understanding. The Buddha's teachings on the nature of reality and the path to liberation from suffering through mindfulness and inquiry could be seen as consistent with Plato's emphasis on philosophical inquiry and contemplation.

Russell was an advocate for reason and critical thinking. He was highly critical of traditional religious beliefs. The Buddha's teachings on the nature of reality and the path to liberation from suffering through inquiry and contemplation could be seen as consistent with Russell's emphasis on reason and empirical evidence.

My inclusion of these philosophers was to make the point, if not simply a comparative one, that claiming the Dhamma and the Buddha are a religion simply does not derive from the cornerstone philosophies of Western culture. So then, on what basis and on what foundation can such a claim be true?

Nearly every philosopher, from ancient to modern, who have profoundly impacted the shaping and culture of Western thought, hold negative views of religion. Following is a brief compilation of the views held by the World's most influential philosophers:

- **Epicurus:** Believed that the gods were not involved in human affairs and that *religion was a source of fear and superstition that hindered human happiness.*
- **Lucretius:** Was influenced by Epicurean ideas and was *highly critical of traditional religious beliefs*, which he embodied in his work known as "On the Nature of Things."
- **Friedrich Nietzsche:** Was critical of traditional religious beliefs, particularly Christianity, which he saw as *a source of repression and nihilism.* He believed that individuals should create their own values and *reject the influence of religion and tradition.*
- **Jean-Paul Sartre:** Was critical of traditional religious beliefs and saw them as *a form of alienation and oppression.* He believed that individuals should take responsibility for their own lives and create their own meaning in a world that is inherently meaningless.
- **Bertrand Russell:** Was critical of traditional religious beliefs and saw them as *a source of superstition and dogmatism.* He believed that individuals should base their beliefs on reason and empirical evidence rather than faith.
- **Michel Foucault:** Was critical of traditional religious beliefs and saw them as *a form of power and control that operated through disciplinary mechanisms.* He was interested in the ways in which religious and other social institutions shape our subjectivities and experiences.
- **Plato:** Was *critical of traditional religious beliefs* and sought to replace them with a rational, philosophical worldview based on reason and inquiry.
- **Sam Harris:** Is critical of traditional religious beliefs and sees them as *a source of irrationality and conflict.* He advocates for a scientific and rational approach to ethics and spirituality.

- **Immanuel Kant:** Was critical of traditional religious beliefs and saw them as *a source of dogmatism and superstition*. He believed that individuals should use reason and the moral law to guide their actions, rather than relying on religious authority.
- **Christopher Hitchens:** Was a vocal critic of religion and polemically saw it as *a source of violence, oppression, and irrationality*. He believed that individuals should reject religious authority and base their beliefs on reason and empirical evidence.

How do the philosophies of these great thinkers compare with the Dhamma and the dhammā? For example; from a **Platonic perspective**, the idea of a universal existence of the Dhamma and the dhammā would be in line with his view of a transcendent realm of eternal, unchanging Forms or Ideas that exist independently of human perception or understanding. The Dhamma and the dhammā could be seen as part of this realm of eternal truths that can be discovered through philosophical inquiry and contemplation.

From the perspective of the **Kantian framework**, the idea of a universal existence of the Dhamma and the dhammā could be seen as consistent with Kant's idea of the noumenal realm, which is the realm of *things as they are in themselves, independent of human perception*. The noumenal realm cannot be known directly, but only through the mediation of our cognitive faculties. Both the Dhamma and the dhammā could be seen as part of the realm of things as they are in themselves, which can be apprehended through direct insight rather than intellectual analysis.

From a **Nietzschean perspective**, the distinction between the Dhamma and religion could be seen as an example of his critique of religion as a form of dogmatic, life-denying ideology. Both the Dhamma and the dhammā, as natural laws that are discovered rather than invented, could be seen as an example of Nietzsche's idea of the "will to power," which emphasizes the importance of embracing life and asserting one's own values rather than accepting the values imposed by religion or tradition.

Additionally, in the **Sartrean framework**, the idea of the Dhamma and the dhammā as a universal natural law could be seen as consistent with Sartre's idea of human freedom and responsibility. The Dhamma and the dhammā could be seen as objective facts of the world, but the way in which we respond to them is a matter of our own subjective choice and responsibility, which is identical to the Buddha's teachings. The Buddha's discovery and disclosure of the natural law (dhammā) could be seen as an example of how human beings can exercise their freedom and responsibility to make sense of the world and find meaning in their lives.

One could also make the case that the philosophy of Michele Foucault, another highly influential modern-age philosopher who had a profound impact on the social and political structure of the West, also aligns with the teachings of the Buddha. Both Foucault and the Buddha were concerned with understanding the nature of power and its effects on individuals and society.

The Buddha's teachings emphasized the importance of understanding the causes of suffering and the ways in which desire, and attachment to rituals and dogma, can lead to the perpetuation of cycles of suffering. Similarly, Foucault's philosophy emphasized the ways in which power relations operate in social institutions, such as religion, and shape our experiences and subjectivities.

Lastly, the ideas of Bertrand Russell also align with those taught by the Buddha. Russell was an atheist and did not believe in the existence of God, likewise the Buddha did not address the existence of God. The Buddha's teachings focused more on the nature of suffering and the path to liberation from it. With regard to ethics, both Russell and the Buddha emphasized the importance of ethical values such as compassion, kindness, and social justice.

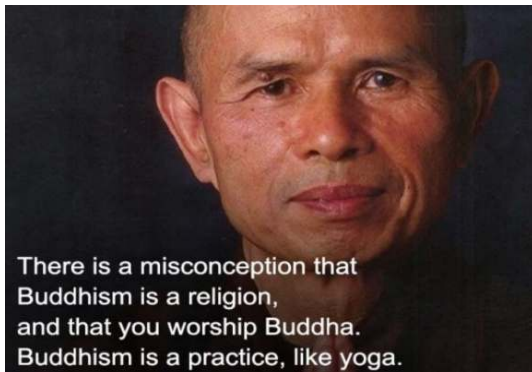
However, while the Buddha's ethical teachings were grounded in his understanding of the nature of reality and the causes of suffering, Russell derived his ethical values from reason and empathy. Russell also strongly aligns with the Buddha's teachings regarding dogmatism. Both Russell and the Buddha were critical of dogmatic beliefs and emphasized the importance of critical thinking and rational inquiry. Russell was a vocal critic of traditional religious beliefs, while the Buddha encouraged his followers to question all beliefs and to find truth through personal experience and inquiry. Also, Russell believed that the purpose of life is to create a more just and humane society, and that ethical values are essential for achieving this goal. The Buddha taught that the purpose of life is to overcome suffering and achieve liberation from the cycle of birth and death through the practice of mindfulness and compassion.

The dhammā are natural laws, which can only be revealed and not established. I maintain that modern-day forms of Buddhism reduce the original teachings of the Buddha causing them to BE just another religion. The practices and doctrines of modern-day forms of Buddhism make it a challenge to distinguish differences from other religious ideologies. The original Dhamma is the key that differentiates the teachings of the Buddha from conventional religious ideas, as the original Dhamma emphasizes a non-traditional approach, placing a greater emphasis on practice over beliefs.

The Pāli texts suggest that the Buddha did not endorse traditional religious practices like Brahmanism, considering them to be a hindrance on the path to mental awakening. He also believed that rituals were not essential to attaining one's ultimate goal. Renouncing past religious affiliations and societal norms was crucial for those seeking enlightenment. Nevertheless, modern forms of Buddhism influenced by Western ideas and scholarship are often conflated with faith-based religions, a view challenged by some who argue that the Buddha did not create Buddhism but rather discovered the natural laws governing the dhammā, which predates his teachings. Someone who truly understands the dhammā recognizes it as a natural law that has always existed, independent of any human interpretation.

The Buddha did not invent the dhammā and therefore cannot be considered its founder or author. If the dhammā is indeed a natural law, how could the Buddha have created it? He is not a god. That would be similar to stating that Albert Einstein invented gravity or that Democritus created the atom in 400 BCE. Most of these armchair Buddhist philosophers do not know the difference between Dhamma and dhammā, which is why they so ignorantly claim that the Buddha is the founder of Buddhism. Modern Buddhism is a creation of human beings.

Based on what is recorded in the Pali texts, it can be inferred that the Buddha was known for his exceptional kindness towards all individuals. His teachings were aimed at those who wanted to improve themselves and break free from societal norms. It is evident that his primary focus was on the individual rather than the world at large. Centuries of testimonials from followers attest to the fact that adopting the Buddha's teachings leads to a more satisfying life. Also, the Buddha was not a social reformer as is evident from his teachings, which focused on the individual rather than society as a whole. There is no evidence in the texts where he addressed social inequality, as he considered it to be unrelated to the goal of attaining Nibbana and ending one's suffering. In the *Vasala Sutta* (No. 27),⁴³ the Buddha explains that social status is not determined by birth and that it is the individual's actions that determines a person's worth. The texts indicate that the Buddha was flexible in his approach and encouraged individuals to discover the natural Dhamma through their own judgement, as reflected in the simile of the raft in the *Majjhima Nikaya*.



Thich Nhat Hanh on "Is Buddhism a Religion"

The late Vietnamese Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh stated:

"Buddhism is not a religion, it's a practice, similar to yoga, which you can do irrespective of religious beliefs. It's a practice, a practice to awaken to how we deceive ourselves and learn how to self-correct. I call it a wisdom tradition."

Bhikkhu Bodhi, a prominent scholar and monk of the Theravada school, a prolific writer on Dhamma topics, writes in the foreword to Acharya Buddhārakkhita's translation of the *Dhammapada*, a highly regarded text from the Pāli canon:

⁴³ Vasala Sutta: <https://accessinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/snp/snp.1.07.piya.html>

“To his followers, the Buddha is neither a god, a divine incarnation, or a prophet bearing a message of divine revelation, but a human being who, by his own striving and intelligence, reached the highest spiritual attainment of which a [hu]man is capable; perfect wisdom, full enlightenment, complete purification of mind.”

The *Kālāma Sutta*, a crucial discourse in the Pāli Canon, is widely regarded as the “*charter of free inquiry*” by both Theravada and Mahayana practitioners. Theravada monk Soma Thera remarks:

*“The instruction of the Kalamas (Kalama Sutta) is justly famous for its encouragement of free inquiry; the spirit of the sutta signifies a teaching that is exempt from fanaticism, bigotry, dogmatism, and intolerance.”*⁴⁴

The theoretical connections between the original teachings of the Buddha and modern forms of Buddhism, according to Buddhist armchair philosophers, are based on very selective interpretations of the Buddha's teachings that are taken out of context. A comprehensive study of the Buddha's original teachings reveals a quite obvious void of dogmatism or faith-based concepts, which is evidenced through the context and meaning of the Buddha's words. The true essence of the Buddha's teachings can only be understood through direct personal experience, as the teachings remain just concepts until brought to life, revealing a new reality, deeper understanding, and a different perspective on life not found in theistic religious doctrines, dogmas, or practices.



Michel Foucault

When comparing the teachings of the Buddha to the perspective of religion, I believe a Foucauldian approach⁴⁵ should be taken, examining the evolution of religious ideas and concepts before making a definitive assessment of what constitutes a religion and how it relates to the conventional worldview. However, such a comprehensive study is not required when it comes to the Dhamma.

“It is not that religion is delusional by nature, nor that the individual, beyond present-day religion, rediscovers his most suspect psychological origins. But, religious delusion is a function of the secularization of culture: religion may be the object of delusional belief insofar as the culture of a group no longer permits the assimilation of religious or mystical beliefs in the present context of experience.” - Michel Foucault [1962]⁴⁶

44 Is Buddhism a Religion: Article Src: <https://fredriklyhagen.medium.com/is-buddhism-a-religion-eeafa59c95f0>

45 Foucauldian: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Foucauldian>

46 Religion and Culture, Foucault, Michel, Src: <https://archive.org/details/MichelFoucaultReligionAndCulture1999Routledge/mode/1up>

The Foucauldian approach to religion represents a critical ontological perspective that emphasizes the relationship between power and knowledge in shaping religious institutions and practices. Michel Foucault argued that religious institutions are used to control individuals and that power is pervasive throughout society. Individuals are not passive recipients of power, but active agents capable of resisting and challenging power structures. Overall, the Foucauldian approach to religion is characterized by a critical and questioning perspective that emphasizes the role of power and knowledge in shaping religious beliefs and practices, and the potential for individuals to resist and challenge these power dynamics.

A comprehensive examination in the manner that Foucault studied world religious beliefs enables critical evaluations that question the conditioned origins and evolution of religion as a concept. Foucault's examination includes all the dependencies and connections between religion and other institutions such as medicine and religious authorities. It also involves an analysis of the politics of mystery in religious literature and the power dynamics of religious revolts, revealing the disciplinary regimes of religious institutions and the technological practices that shape Western ethics, concepts and ideas of what religion is. Beliefs play a crucial role in shaping human behavior. If the prevalent belief is that religion is ineffective in alleviating suffering and unhappiness, this consensus undoubtedly has a hand in shaping our world. Philosopher Sam Harris echoes this in a lecture he gave at the University of California Irvine in 2016.

*"Beliefs are a representation of the world. Clearly, they are mental representations of the world. But, they're not only that. A belief is a representation of the world which is taken to actually represent the world, which is to say that it is taken to be true."*⁴⁷

Once again, it seems apropos to refer to Ockham's formula of inquiry, which promotes simplicity by discarding unnecessary assumptions and embracing the first adequate explanation or cause, as exemplified by Foucault and Harris. This is, of course, unless we choose to adopt the same dismissive attitude towards logical discourse as Church Father Tertullian, in his work titled, "De Carne Christi" (On the Flesh of Christ), which was written around the year 200 CE, who famously proclaimed "*Credo quia absurdum*" or "I believe it because it is absurd."

⁴⁷ Quote: Sam Harris, 2016 Lecture given at the University of California at Irvine. Src: <https://youtu.be/sQuDWt9qmBs>

Noticeable Linguistic Trends

The impact of technology on language has been a topic of debate in modern times, with some arguing that it represents an evolution rather than decay. However, others point to evidence of language decay in the oversimplification of concepts and objects, resulting in overgeneralizations aimed at saving time and increasing convenience. This trend is reflected in the growing use of emojis and other graphical representations as substitutes for language in expressing concepts and emotions. The rapid advancement of technology also limits verbal expressions of life experiences to short sound bites or suggestive images, leading to techno-paraphrasing that narrows and redefines the meaning of words.⁴⁸

Modern technology has introduced new challenges to communication, particularly in terms of clarity and precision. Digital communication channels like email, text messaging, and social media often lack the nonverbal cues and contextual information that are present in face-to-face communication. As a result, misunderstandings and misinterpretations can occur, making it challenging to convey tone and intention in written communication. The rise of digital communication has also raised concerns about the impact of informal and non-standard language on communication quality. Linguists worry that the use of abbreviated or non-standard language in digital communication may erode traditional standards of grammar and usage, potentially impacting the quality of communication more broadly.

Semantic changes can be seen in the current meanings of words such as "love," "awesome," "gay," "bad," "like," "nice," "literally," and "religion."⁴⁹ In this fast-paced era, the focus on doing and having instead of being⁵⁰ is widespread,⁵¹ reducing the descriptive language of life experiences to small emoji-like expressions.⁵² The inflection of the human voice, which conveys intent, has become less important. The emphasis on speed and quantity over quality in our language has resulted in a neglect of the need to contemplate our existence and a decline in our ability to effectively express it.⁵³ The constant focus on doing and the reliance on modern technology often leads to a sense of emptiness and dissatisfaction.

48 Decay of English Language: <https://www.intellectualtakeout.org/blog/decay-our-language-happening/> | <https://news.usc.edu/trojan-family/why-language-changes-evolution-of-speech/> | <https://www.bbvaopenmind.com/en/technology/digital-world/emoji-the-new-global-language/>

49 Semantic Changes in Present-Day English: Src:

https://dclu.langston.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1022&context=mccabe_theses

50 Difference Between Being and Doing: <https://www.mindful.org/difference-between-being-and-doing/>

51 Being Rather than Doing: <https://www.brisbanecitypsychologist.com.au/how-being-rather-than-doing-can-change-your-life/>

52 Is Time Speeding Up? Psychology Today: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/future-trends/201808/is-time-speeding>

53 Fast-Paced-World: How Can We Keep Up: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-power-slow/200911/how-can-we-keep-in-fast-paced-world>

To fill this void, people tend to use language shortcuts, keeping their minds occupied to the point where even a moment of inactivity causes discomfort and boredom. Of all the possible side-effects of electronic communication the most concerning is that society has developed a craving for instant gratification, which is reflected by our underdeveloped command of language. Fewer people engage in reflective activities like reading, meditating or creative pursuits, which can provide emotional fulfillment and prevent feelings of emptiness, restlessness, and boredom.

The desire for material accumulation has resulted in a neglect of the need for self-reflection and knowledge, strengthening our attachments to the physical world. Society's increasing haste drives the demand for more distractions for the purpose of keeping our minds and senses occupied. However, the pursuit of a meaningful and happy life cannot be reduced to abbreviated explanations or conveyed through cell phone acronyms or emojis.

Semantic change refers to the evolution of the meanings of words over time, and it is a natural and ongoing process in all languages. Many words in English, including those that were previously mentioned, have undergone semantic changes in their current usage compared to their original meanings or usage in earlier periods of the language. For example, "awesome" originally meant "causing fear or dread," but is now commonly used to mean "impressive" or "excellent." Similarly, "gay" originally meant "happy" or "carefree," but is now commonly used to refer to sexual orientation. The meanings of words can also shift based on changes in social or cultural contexts, as well as through processes such as metaphor and metonymy (figures of speech).

Boxing in the Buddha

The lamentable oversimplification of language and the careless application of categorization have wrought extensive misunderstandings of the original teachings of the Buddha. The egregious error of labelling the Buddha's teachings as a religion, without proper consideration of the essence of the Dhamma, has further exacerbated this problem.

To truly comprehend the Buddha's teachings, one must devote attention to the precise meaning of the words, particularly Pali words, that were specifically chosen by the Buddha to express his meaning. The practice of the Dhamma requires diligent dedication and cannot be reduced to a single label, as is erroneously done when it is classified as a religion.

The pursuit of external desires diverts attention from the exploration of our inner world, and encourages compartmentalization, which is antithetical to the teachings of the Buddha Dhamma. It is imperative that we take heed of these concerns and strive to understand the profundity of the Buddha's teachings in all their nuanced complexity.

The propensity to simplify and categorize the teachings of the Buddha, without a proper understanding, is a common trait among those who claim to be Buddhist philosophers but merely occupy an armchair. Their aim is not to illuminate the experiences gained through the Dhamma nor to advance it as a solution to the problems of human existence, but rather to promulgate the dogmatic view that the Buddha's teachings are a religion. Why, and for what purpose, completely escapes me.

The Buddha taught a set of concepts that lead to the liberation from suffering known as the Four Noble Truths, which serve as a conduit for comprehending the Dhamma. By knowing and practicing the Four Noble Truths, one can attain a mental and emotional awakening, even if they have no further knowledge of the Dhamma.

One may question the significance of this debate regarding the categorization of Buddhism as a religion. Specifically, what is at stake in this argument? What, if anything, would be gained by labeling the Buddha's teachings as a religion? Is there any significance in this debate? What, if anything, is actually at stake? What, if anything, would be lost by not considering the Dhamma to be a religion? It is quite possible that the only thing at risk is the position and reputation of those who argue for this classification, and that their ego is threatened by a different perspective than their own.

What if it were universally accepted that the teachings of the Buddha are not religion? What would be gained by such an acceptance? There could be several potential gains if the teachings of the Buddha were not classified as a religion. One potential gain would be that the teachings could be more readily accepted or integrated into secular discourse or philosophical frameworks, as they would not be bound by the constraints of religious dogma or sectarianism. This could allow the philosophical insights of the Buddha to be more widely disseminated and appreciated, without being limited to specific cultural or religious contexts.

Additionally, the non-religious classification could help make the teachings of the Buddha more accessible to individuals who do not identify with a particular religion or spiritual tradition, promoting greater cross-cultural dialogue and understanding. The non-religious classification could also help emphasize the universal and non-sectarian nature of its teachings, which are often focused on promoting compassion, wisdom, and understanding rather than specific religious beliefs or rituals. By emphasizing the philosophical and ethical dimensions of the Dhamma, rather than its religious or cultural aspects, the teachings of the Buddha could be more readily integrated into a wider range of philosophical and intellectual frameworks.

Labeling the teachings of the Buddha as a "religion" restricts understanding and application of the Four Noble Truths for many. Some armchair Buddhist philosophers may seek to distinguish themselves, but their claims are not rooted in the teachings of the Dhamma and do not withstand scrutiny.

Those who view the Buddha's teachings with the perception of traditional religion do so with bias, limited knowledge, and a lack of understanding, leading to uninformed conclusions. A solid foundation in the Buddha's teachings is necessary for accurate understanding (*takka*⁵⁴/*naya*⁵⁵).

The use of the Pali word "moha" by the Buddha illuminates the actions of those who lack knowledge and understanding.⁵⁶ A true practitioner of the Dhamma, possessing practical knowledge of the Buddha's teachings, recognizes biases as mere attachments to philosophical or politically-oriented arguments. Armchair Buddhist philosophers dismiss anyone who challenges their view that Buddhism is a religion, claiming that contradicting criticism stems from the criticizer's desire to escape one's religious upbringing. It is worth contemplating whether this reasoning actually contains any validity or is merely a sweeping generalization.

On the other hand, could it be that these pro-religion claimants themselves have biases influenced by their own personal aversions? Perhaps their bias stems from an attempt to preserve their own childhood experiences and memories of a faith-based religion. Ultimately, both Buddhism and religion are nothing more than concepts until one has a sound basis for the argument, founded on direct personal experience, knowledge, and understanding. While some claim that Buddhism encompasses all experiences, in reality, the Buddha's teachings, the Dhamma, are nothing without a clear understanding of them. The teachings and the Dhamma are simply concepts until they bring about the realization of the truth about one's own experiences and the cause of suffering, which is clinging to the concept of a self. This awakening to the truth of non-self (*anatta*) and impermanence (*anicca*) marks the clear distinction between the Buddha's teachings and religion.

Defining the Dhamma as a religion restricts it, placing it and the Buddha into a box. The religious classification of the Dhamma creates a set of expectations or assumptions about the nature of the teachings, such as the presence of specific religious rituals or practices, which are not central to the Buddha's message. It can also limit the accessibility of the teachings to individuals who do not identify with religion or who have negative perceptions of religion. This can limit the potential audience for the teachings and may discourage some individuals from engaging with the teachings on a deeper level.

54 Takka: Pāli: तक्क Def: "Doubt; science of logic; (lit. "turning & twisting") to trick; to puzzle; a doubtful view (often= *ditṭhi*, appl. like *sammā*, *micchā* -- *ditṭhi*); hair-splitting reasoning; sophistry."

Src: https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/Pāli_query.py?qs=takka&matchtype=default

55 Naya: Pāli: नय Def: "Method; plan; manner; inference; right conclusion; truth, system, logic (*Dāvs* iii.41.); fitness, right manner; propriety; right conduct; often appld to the "right path"

(*ariyamagga=ariyañāya* Vin i.10) D iii.120; S v.19, 141, 167 Src: https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/Pāli_query.py?qs=naya&matchtype=default

56 Moha: Pāli: मोह Def: "Stupidity; delusion; dullness of mind; bewilderment; Def'd as "dukkhe aññāṇaṇ." Often coupled with *rāga* & *dosa* as one of the 3 cardinal effects of *citta*, making one unable to grasp the higher truths and to enter the Path (*sotapanna*)."

Src: https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/Pāli_query.py?qs=moha&searchhws=yes&matchtype=exact

Moreover, categorizing the Dhamma as a religion can lead to sectarianism and dogmatism, which are contrary to the Buddha's emphasis on personal inquiry and insight. It can also lead to the creation of specific institutions and hierarchies that prioritize the preservation of religious traditions over the promotion of personal understanding and insight. Such limitations discourage individuals from engaging on a deeper level and reduce the Buddha's teachings to superficial spiritual "fluff." In a brief article by Barbara O'Brien, a Buddhist journalist, titled *"Is Western Buddhism in Danger of Being Turned into Spiritual Fluff?"* O'Brien talks about the difference between spiritual fluff and religion when it comes to Western Buddhism. She voices



her concerns that Buddhism in the West is in danger of being overly romanticized and watered down. O'Brien cites an article on the Washington Posts' 'On Faith' blog that much of what is presented as Buddhism to Westerners is actually "...a kind of Xerox copy of Buddhism that is based on the old, I'm Okay, You're Okay' psychology of the 1960s."

O'Brien argues that in order for the Buddha's teachings to really transform your life, it must be "directed by the discipline of practice, and the wisdom of those who have gone before," worrying that Buddhism in the West, especially Zen, is being reduced to a palatable spiritual fluff before the more serious elements of the tradition have a chance to take root, O'Brien stated:

"I have two concerns. One is that many people are so turned off by western religious institutions that they run screaming from anything that looks like a religious institution. So, they cling to faux Buddhism and run away from the real thing, which is sad. My other concern is that marshmallow fluff Buddhism will supplant the real thing before the real thing has thoroughly taken root. This is a particular danger for Zen, I think, because it did have the misfortune of becoming popularized and then romanticized in books and film, but it's something that's an issue for all of Buddhism, I think."

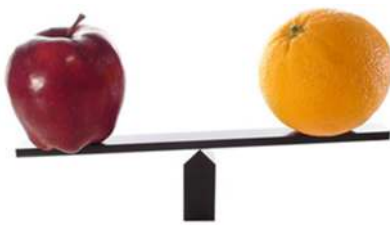
Similarly, renowned author and Buddhist nun, Pema Chodron, writes in her book *“Wisdom of No Escape,”*

“I’ve always thought that the phrase “to take refuge” is very curious because it sounds theistic, dualistic, and dependent “to take refuge” in something. I remember very clearly, at a time of enormous stress in my life, reading Alice in Wonderland. Alice became a heroine for me because she fell into this hole and she just free-fell. She didn’t grab for the edges, she wasn’t terrified, trying to stop her fall; she just fell and she looked at things as she went down. Then, when she landed, she was in a new place. She didn’t take refuge in anything. I used to aspire to be like that because I saw myself getting near the hole and just screaming, holding back, not wanting to go anywhere where there was no hand to hold. Working with obstacles is life’s journey. The warrior is always coming up against dragons.

*Of course, the warrior gets scared, particularly before the battle. It’s frightening. But with a shaky, tender heart the warrior realizes that he or she is just about to step into the unknown, and then goes forth to meet the dragon. The warrior realizes that the dragon is nothing but unfinished business presenting itself, and that it’s “fear” that really needs to be worked with. The dragon is just a motion picture that appears there, and it appears in many forms: as the lover who jilted us, as the parent who never loved us enough, as someone who abused us. Basically, what we work with is our fear and our holding back, which are not necessarily obstacles. The only obstacle is **ignorance**; this refusal to look at our unfinished business. If every time the warrior goes out and meets the dragon, he or she says, “Hah! It’s a dragon again. No way am I going to face this,” and just splits [separating yourself from the experience], then life becomes a recurring story of getting up in the morning, going out, meeting the dragon, saying, “No way,” and splitting. In that case you become more and more timid and more and more afraid and more of a baby. No one’s nurturing you, but you’re still in that cradle, and you never go through your puberty rites.*

So, we say we take refuge in the Buddha, we take refuge in the dharma, we take refuge in the sangha. In the oryoki meal chant we say, “The Buddha’s virtues are inconceivable, the dharma’s virtues are inconceivable, the sangha’s virtues are inconceivable,” and “I prostrate to the Buddha, I prostrate to the dharma, I prostrate to the sangha, I prostrate respectfully and always to these three. Well, we aren’t talking about finding comfort in the Buddha, dharma, and sangha. We aren’t talking about prostrating in order to be safe. The Buddha, we say traditionally, is the example of what we also can be. The Buddha is the awakened one, and we too are the Buddha. It’s simple. We are the Buddha. It’s not just a way of speaking. We are the awakened one, meaning one who continually leaps, one who continually opens, one who continually goes forward.”

Scrutiny: “Critical observation or examination; the *careful and detailed examination* of something in order to obtain information about it.” – Oxford English Dictionary



Apples & Oranges

The mere intellectual study of the Dhamma is an insufficient foundation upon which to posit that either the Buddha or the Dhamma are religious in nature. Practical understanding is only

acquired through the practice and application of the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. This holds true for all disciplines, including music, where personal experience and practice are essential. One must note that merely comprehending the Dhamma intellectually or studying the Buddha's teachings will not produce the same results as actively practicing and experiencing the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. The Buddha emphasized this concept time and again. Being “near” Buddhism is not the same as being “in” Buddhism. The truth about the nature of reality can only be fully understood through direct personal experience and practical application, which forms the foundation of awakening. Intellectual knowledge alone is insufficient for achieving Nibbana (Pāli) (Sanskrit Nirvana). One will never learn to paint like Vermeer merely by gazing at his paintings or studying the artist himself. One will never become mentally and emotionally awakened or become a Buddha by means of intellectual comprehension alone.



What are the Qualifiers?

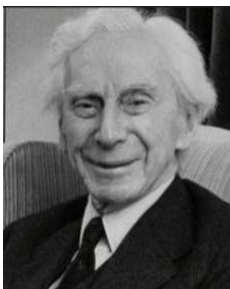
In the world of religion, the Judeo-Christian model wields great power, dictating the very definition of the term itself, despite the existence of other worldviews and beliefs. Through the centuries, the Judaeo-Christian tradition has left an indelible mark on Western history and culture, shaping our very notions of morality, ethics, and spirituality, while also influencing our understanding of religion. The cultural influences of this tradition have extended to art, literature, music, and other forms of expression, further reinforcing our understanding of religion as a system of beliefs and practices dedicated to the worship of a supernatural being. And let us not forget the power of language, as the very words we use to describe religion are imbued with the connotations and associations of this influential tradition.

The very term "religion" has its roots in the Latin word "*religio*," which was used in the context of the Judaeo-Christian tradition to describe the set of beliefs and practices related to the worship of God. This linguistic influence has helped to reinforce our understanding of religion as being tied to faith-based traditions that emphasize a belief in a higher power. As Austin Cline, a Princeton graduate and expert on religion, stated in his 2019 article "*What Is Religion? ...and the Problem of Defining Religion*." Cline states:

"The definition of religion can be found in the Encyclopedia of Philosophy, which outlines the various criteria used to determine whether a system qualifies as a religion. The Encyclopedia of Philosophy lists traits of religions rather than declaring religion to be one thing or another, arguing that the more markers present in a belief system, the more "religious-like" it is. Thus, to be considered a religion these elements must exist:

1. *Belief in a central supernatural being.*
2. *A distinction between sacred and blasphemous objects.*
3. *Ritual acts focused on sacred objects.*
4. *A moral code believed to be sanctioned by the gods.*
5. *Characteristically religious feelings (awe, sense of mystery, sense of guilt, adoration), which tend to be aroused in the presence of sacred objects during the practice of ritual, and which are connected in concert with the gods.*
6. *Prayer and other forms of communication with gods."*
7. *A world view, or a general picture of the world as a whole, and the place of the individual therein. This picture contains some specification of an overall purpose or point of the world with the indication of how the individual fits into it.*
8. *A more or less total organization of one's life based on the world view.*

He goes on to comment: "*This definition captures much of what religion is across diverse cultures. It includes sociological, psychological, and historical factors and allows for broader gray areas in the concept of religion. It also recognizes that "religion" exists on a continuum with other types of belief systems, such that some aren't religious at all, some are very close to religions, and some definitely are religions.*"

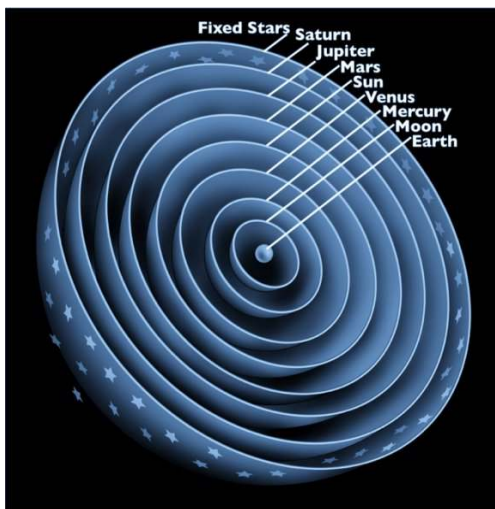


Bertrand Russell, the renowned philosopher and mathematician, held a critical view of faith-based religion and the idea of truth being defined by religious doctrine. His views on the nature of reality and truth, and the importance of evidence and reason in shaping our understanding of the world, are relevant to this discussion on the definition of religion and its validity.

Russell stated: *“The fact that an opinion has been widely held is no evidence whatever that it [the opinion] is not utterly absurd.”*⁵⁷

Russell's famous “teapot analogy” highlights the idea that beliefs should be proportionate to the available evidence, as argued by Hume. Russell argued that just because something cannot be proven does not mean it can be believed without evidence. This same logic can be applied to the concept of religion, as beliefs and practices should have a solid foundation in evidence and not just rely on blind faith. Russell’s “teapot analogy” is a useful tool in understanding the relationship between beliefs, evidence, and truth in the context of religion.

“If I were to suggest that between the Earth and Mars there is a china teapot revolving about the sun in an elliptical orbit, nobody would be able to disprove my assertion, provided I were careful to add that the teapot is too small to be revealed even by our most powerful telescopes. But, if I were to go on to say that, since my assertion cannot be disproved, it is intolerable presumption on the part of human reason to doubt it, I should rightly be thought to be talking nonsense. If, however, the existence of such a teapot were affirmed in ancient books, taught as the sacred truth every Sunday, and instilled into the minds of children at school, hesitation to believe in its existence would become a mark of eccentricity and entitle the doubter to the attentions of the psychiatrist in an enlightened age or of the Inquisitor in an earlier time. It is customary to suppose that, if a belief is widespread, there must be something reasonable about it. I do not think this view can be held by anyone who has studied history.”



Medieval View of the Solar System

Russell’s philosophy of religion focuses on the importance of critical thinking and skepticism in the evaluation of beliefs, including religious ones. The mere fact that a concept is widely accepted or believed by a particular group of people does not automatically make it true. It is crucial to carefully examine and evaluate evidence and arguments, instead of blindly accepting ideas or beliefs without questioning their validity. This is especially important when it comes to beliefs that have a significant impact on individuals

and society, such as those related to religion.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ **Bertrand Russell:** <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/russell/#RA>

⁵⁸ **Galileo Heresy:** Src: <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/galileo-is-accused-of-heresy>

For myself, while I agree with the ideas of most of these philosophers, I tend to side mostly with those of David Hume because they closely align with the philosophy and teachings of the Buddha. Like Hume, I do not believe in divine miracles. Inherently, they are improbable due to the fact that there is no real credible evidence for such supernatural events. Even when such things are mentioned in the Pali texts, they are always used as examples and metaphors for the purpose of promoting the central message of the Buddha's teachings of liberation from suffering. Most so-called miracles, I believe, can be explained through natural means.

Like the Buddha, Hume believed that all phenomena are explained through naturalistic means. Due to the lack of evidence of divine supernatural interventions, skepticism is natural, and there is more evidence for naturalistic explanations. This skepticism also naturally extends to the supernatural design argument, in essence that the complexity and order of the Universe is evidence of a divine creator. This argument is flawed for the simple fact that one cannot rely on analogies and assumptions that are not justifiable by available evidence. Likewise, both the Buddha and Hume's views of moral beliefs are not based on reason or evidence, but on emotions, bodily sensations and sentiments, which negates claims that moral beliefs and objective moral values are based on the commandments of a supernatural entity.

All of the philosophers mentioned here are considered by the World in general to be wise. As the Buddha stated:

*"Whatever the wise (pandita) people regard as good, I also regard as good. What the wise people regard as bad, I also agree." ("Whatever I approve of, that I delight in" and the second sentence can be translated as "Whatever is opposite to that, that I consider to be so here.")*⁵⁹

The Burden of Proof: The Case at Bar

As an attorney arguing against the claim that the Dhamma constitutes a religion, I would emphasize that the key factor in any such case is the burden of proof. The evidence presented in this case should be based on critical thinking and rational inquiry, considering the conventional meaning of religion. My arguments would stress the following:

Importance of evidence (ākāra): I would argue that critical thinking and rational inquiry require a commitment to evidence-based reasoning. This means that beliefs and claims should be supported by empirical evidence, or at least by logical arguments based on evidence. Such evidence must be both observable and testable, particularly in the context of religion, which would mean that claims about the existence of a deity or the truth of religious teachings should be supported by such evidence.

⁵⁹ See Glossary for word-for-word meanings.

Burden of proof (*pariyāya*): I would argue that in the absence of evidence, the burden of proof should rest with the person making the claim. In other words, if someone claims that a deity exists or that a particular religious doctrine is true, it is the claimant's responsibility to provide evidence to support such a claim. If the claimant cannot provide sufficient evidence that is both observable and testable, then the claim should be regarded as without merit.

Skepticism (*vicikicchā*): Skepticism is an important aspect of critical thinking and rational inquiry, particularly in the context of religion. Skepticism involves questioning claims and seeking evidence in support of them, rather than accepting things on faith, hearsay or authority. Skepticism allows one to consider alternative explanations that are both observable and testable.

Implications for religion: Principles of evidence, burden of proof, and skepticism have important implications to prove any claim, including the claim that the Dhamma and the Buddha are a religion. The existence of a deity or the truth of religious teachings should be subject to the same standards of evidence and burden of proof as any other claim. Meaning that if there is insufficient evidence to support a claim, or if the burden of proof has not been met, then the claim should be regarded as unsupported and without merit.

The role of evidence and burden of proof are pivotal in determining whether the original teachings of the Buddha constitute a religion. These principles encourage critical thinking, promoting objective and reasonable evaluations based on evidence and reason. Any claim, either for or against, must be supported by reasonable evidence, not solely by opinions or beliefs of oneself or others, to prove its factual truth. An ontological examination is essential to compare the Dhamma practices with those of faith-based religions, as it identifies the fundamental characteristics that make up a religion, such as beliefs, practices, purpose, and rituals. It also helps to understand the ontological differences between the Dhamma philosophy and other religions, such as the existence or non-existence of a creator deity, which is crucial in determining whether the Dhamma qualifies as a religion. Any claim regarding its status as a religion without such examination lacks a solid foundation and is misleading and potentially harmful. Therefore, an ontological examination is crucial to provide a rigorous and informed comparison, and any claim without it lacks merit.

Therefore, it's important to take the time to conduct a thorough ontological examination when making any claims about the philosophy of Dhamma practices or their comparison to other belief systems in the following way:

First, an ontological examination helps us understand the underlying principles and assumptions of the Buddha's teachings. This can provide a deeper and more nuanced understanding, which is essential for any meaningful comparison with other belief systems.

Second, an ontological examination helps to identify and evaluate any potential conflicts or inconsistencies between the Buddha's teachings and other belief systems. This helps us better understand the similarities and differences between the philosophies of these systems, and can also help us identify any areas of potential dialogue or conflict.

Third, an ontological examination helps us recognize and appreciate the complexity and richness of the Buddha's teachings. This can help us avoid *simplistic* or *reductionist* comparisons that fail to fully capture the depth and breadth of the Dhamma. However, if a comparison between Buddhism and faith-based religion only uses assumptions and superficial overgeneralized information, it could be harmful to the Buddha's teachings in several ways. For example:

1. It could perpetuate stereotypes and misconceptions about the Buddha and his teachings, which can lead to misunderstanding and prejudice.
2. It could oversimplify and distort the teachings, which can lead to a shallow and inaccurate understanding of Dhamma philosophy and practices.
3. It could fail to appreciate the richness and complexity of the Dhamma, which can lead to a lack of respect and appreciation for the Buddha and his teachings.

Evidence (*Ākāra*): The central and fundamental foundations for the source of the teachings of the Buddha are the Pali texts. The central and fundamental foundations of faith-based religions is largely the Bible. Examples of specific passages from the Pali Canon and the Bible demonstrate the differences between Dhamma philosophy, the Pali Texts and the Bible:

1. **Four Noble Truths vs. Ten Commandments:** The Four Noble Truths (*Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*) is central to the Dhamma in the Pali texts, and the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17) are central to the Bible. Significant differences between the Four Noble Truths and the Ten Commandments demonstrate the fundamental foundations on which each of the two doctrines are built. For example, the First Noble Truth holds that suffering is inherent in human existence, while the First Commandment holds that there is only one God and that worship of other gods is forbidden.
 - a. The specific difference between the Four Noble Truths and the Ten Commandments is that the Four Noble Truths are a set of teachings that describe the nature of suffering and the path an individual can take to achieve liberation from it, while the Ten Commandments are a set of moral and religious laws that instruct believers on how to live a righteous life and avoid punishment from God. The four Noble Truths are observable and testable, while the Ten Commandments are not.

- b. The First Noble Truth holds that while suffering is inherent in human existence, because of the intrinsic nature of reality, being the impermanence and unsatisfactoriness of life, which is provable. In contrast, the First Commandment holds that there is only one God and that worship of other gods is forbidden, of which no evidence is producible in order to be proven. The philosophical difference between these two teachings is that the Four Noble Truths focus on the nature of existence and the reality of human experience of suffering, while the Ten Commandments focus on the worship of a single deity and the moral laws dictated by God. The First Noble Truth is observable and testable, while the First Commandment is not.
- c. The Four Noble Truths represent a philosophical perspective that emphasizes the impermanence and unsatisfactoriness of life, and the need for individuals to develop an understanding of the nature of existence in order to achieve liberation from suffering. The Four Noble Truths are not dependent on a supreme deity. The Ten Commandments, on the other hand, represent a moral and religious perspective that emphasizes the worship of a single deity and the adherence to a set of moral laws demanded of God in order to escape punishment.

2. **The Noble Eightfold Path vs. The Beatitudes:** The Noble Eightfold Path (*Magga-vibhanga Sutta*) and the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12): A comparison of the Noble Eightfold Path with the Beatitudes demonstrates the differences between the teachings and philosophy of the Buddha and those of Christianity. For example, the Eighth Noble Path holds that an individual person should practice right mindfulness and right concentration to achieve liberation from suffering, while the Beatitudes hold that the meek, merciful, and peacemakers are blessed and will inherit the kingdom of heaven. The Noble Eightfold Path can be proven through direct experience, while the Beatitudes, which suggest that “if” a person has certain character qualities, automatically qualifies them for the kingdom of heaven; presumably a place devoid of suffering, but which is also unprovable.

- a. The specific difference between the Noble Eightfold Path and the Beatitudes is that the Noble Eightfold Path is a set of instructions for individuals to follow in order to achieve liberation from suffering, while the Beatitudes are a set of teachings on the nature of blessedness and the values that lead to spiritual fulfillment. While the Noble Eightfold Path is provable by direct human experience, the Beatitudes, which rely on the favor of God, are not provable. All the elements of the Noble eightfold Path are observable and testable, while the Beatitudes are not.

- b. The Noble Eightfold Path consists of eight interconnected steps that individuals follow in order to achieve a conscious mental awakening, which leads to a liberation from suffering. These steps include right understanding, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. The path focuses on individual practice and self-improvement, and emphasizes the development of wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental discipline. These elements, fundamental to the Dhamma, are provable by direct human experience, which are experienced while the human is alive. That an individual's actions in accordance with this Path are observable and testable, an assertion or testimony of the veracity can truthfully be made.
- c. In contrast, the Beatitudes are a set of teachings on the nature of blessedness and the values that lead to spiritual fulfillment. They include statements such as "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" and "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." The Beatitudes focus on the nature of blessedness and the qualities that are valued in the eyes of God, but are not provable by the fact that the result cannot be experienced by a living human being, but only after death. The dead can neither testify or attest to the veracity or the experience of the Beatitudes. That an individual's actions in accord with this Beatitude is not observable or testable, an assertion or testimony of the veracity cannot truthfully or actually be made.
- d. The difference between these two teachings is that the Noble Eightfold Path focuses on the individual, the individual's practice, and the achievement of liberation through self-improvement and discipline, while in contrast, the Beatitudes focus on the nature of blessedness and the values that are important in the eyes of God. The values that are important to God cannot be attested to nor can testimony be given to prove whether this concept is true. The Noble Eightfold Path is a path of self-transformation, while the Beatitudes are teachings on the nature of spiritual fulfillment according to God and God's approval. Overall, the Noble Eightfold Path can not only provide provable evidence of truth, the very nature of the Path is not dependent on the approval or oversight of a supernatural being, thus no foundational element of religion exists within the framework or philosophy of the Noble Eightfold Path.

3. **Non-Self vs. the Soul:** The concept of non-self (*Anatta-lakkhana Sutta*) and the concept of the soul (1 Corinthians 15:42-44): I would argue that the concept of non-self with the concept of the soul demonstrates one such significant reason not to consider the Dhamma to be a religion. For example, the concept of non-self holds that there is no permanent, unchanging self, and that the self is merely a product of the interplay of various factors. In contrast, the concept of the soul in Christianity holds that the soul is an immortal aspect of the individual that survives after death, and is in the complete control of a supernatural god.
 - a. Anatta refers to the concept that there is no permanent, unchanging self or soul within an individual. Instead, the self is seen as a constantly changing and interdependent collection of mental and physical processes. Anatta emphasizes the impermanence and interdependence of all phenomena, and suggests that there is no permanent or unchanging self or soul that exists beyond these processes. Kamma, on the other hand, refers to the idea that an individual's actions and intentions have consequences, and that these consequences determine the course of the individual's life and future rebirths. Kamma suggests that a person's disposition is neither good nor bad at birth, but is dependent on an individual's intentional actions accumulated by habit over the course of a lifetime.
 - b. In contrast, the concept of the soul in Christianity suggests that human beings possess an immortal and unchanging soul that not only survives after death, but is the possession of a supernatural god. According to 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, the body is sown in corruption, but the soul is raised in incorruption. This creates a paradox, that while the body is corrupt, the soul within the body is pure and incorrupt. The soul is seen as an immortal and eternal aspect of human beings that continues to exist after death, and that is judged by God. This doctrine creates a dichotomy: If the soul, which is immortal, pure and incorrupt, why does the soul need to be judged after a person dies? Christianity emphasizes the eternal and unchanging nature of the soul, and suggests that the soul is the essence of human identity.
 - c. There are significant differences between these concepts. Anatta and kamma emphasize impermanence, change, and interdependence, while the concept of the soul emphasizes immortality and unchanging essence. The teachings of Anatta and kamma state that there is no permanent, unchanging self or soul, and that all phenomena are impermanent and interdependent. The concept of the soul suggests that human beings possess an immortal and unchanging essence that defines their identity.

d. From a pragmatic perspective, the concepts of anatta and kamma are significantly more probable, as they are based on observation and experience. The impermanence and interdependence of all phenomena are observable and testable, and the idea that actions and intentions have consequences is likewise observable and testable. In contrast, the concept of the soul is based on faith and belief, and is not directly observable or testable, and so therefore is improbable.

e. The differences between the Dhamma concepts of anatta and kamma, and the Christian concept of the soul reflect distinct perspectives. The Dhamma concepts are based on observation and testability, making them more likely to be true than the faith-based concepts of Christianity. This makes the Dhamma independent of the worship of a god, while Christian concepts depend on it. Although the concept of the soul is a matter of faith, the pragmatic concepts of anatta and kamma are based on observation and experience, making them more probable.

4. **Bhavana (meditation) vs. Prayer:** The importance of meditation (*Mahasiatipatthana Sutta*) and the importance of prayer (Matthew 6:5-13): I would argue that meditation/becoming (*bah-vah-nah*) in the Dhamma compared to prayer in Christianity, demonstrates a significant difference between the two, being that one is completely dependent on the supplication to a supernatural god and the other is not. For example, the Buddha's teachings emphasize the practice of meditation (*bhavana*) as a means of achieving liberation, while Christianity emphasizes prayer to a supernatural entity as a means of connecting with a god.

a. The most significant difference is in the purpose of Christian prayer and the concept of *bhavana* (meditation/becoming) in the Dhamma, while Christian prayer is primarily focused on communicating with a supernatural god; seeking guidance and blessings from the god, the purpose of *bhavana* (meditation) in the Dhamma is to develop one's own mental clarity and cultivate inner peace and wisdom without any supplication to a supernatural entity.

b. *Bhavana* is a Pali term that refers to the cultivation of the mind; a state of becoming more mentally awake through various practices, including meditation and mindfulness. The goal of *bhavana* is to develop mental clarity, concentration, and insight of one's own life, and to cultivate positive mental states such as loving-kindness, compassion, and equanimity towards one's self and others. *Bhavana* implies that one becomes these things.

- c. *Bhavana* is a philosophy that means purifying the mind and overcoming negative mental states such as greed, anger, and delusion. Part of the literal meaning of the Pali word *bhavana* (*bhava*) is “becoming.” In contrast, Christian prayer is focused on communicating with a supernatural entity god for the purpose of seeking guidance and blessings. Prayer is seen as a way of expressing one's love and gratitude for this supernatural entity, and of asking for help and protection. While prayer can also involve introspection and self-reflection, its primary purpose is to establish a relationship with a supernatural entity and to seek assistance and intervention.
- d. Overall, the purpose of *bhavana* in the Dhamma is to cultivate inner peace, wisdom, and positive mental states, while the purpose of Christian prayer is to establish a relationship with a supernatural entity for guidance and blessings. The goal of these practices is fundamentally different, the concept of *bhavana* is based on observation and experience, which is directly observable or testable, is therefore representative of attestable and verifiable truth.

The Buddha's original teachings are unique because they focus on the nature of human experience. Just as different species cannot be categorized as identical, the Buddha Dhamma cannot be compared to any other philosophy. As it is with the human being, who is unique in that it has a highly developed consciousness, which allows for the ability to communicate and make intentional choices based on knowledge and experience. The Buddha Dhamma places a strong emphasis on the importance of human experience, recognizing that it is experience that sets us apart from other species, which is why the Buddha proclaimed:

“It is very, very rare that one attains the human state.”

Samyutta Nikaya 56.48

Dhamma: Rarity of Opportunity to Hear

Within the Pali Suttas are recorded many instances where the Buddha taught how rare and precious is the opportunity to hear the Dhamma. Some of the most significant Suttas on this topic include:

- Mangala Sutta (Sutta Nipata 2.4) - This discourse describes the highest blessings in life, with the very first blessing being “the opportunity to hear the Dhamma.”

- Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (Samyutta Nikaya 56.11) - This discourse is considered the Buddha's first sermon, and in it he describes the Four Noble Truths and emphasizes the rarity and preciousness of the opportunity to hear the Dhamma.
- Adiya Sutta (Samyutta Nikaya 3.25) - This discourse emphasizes the importance of hearing the Dhamma from someone who has direct knowledge of it, rather than simply hearing second-hand accounts.
- Ani Sutta (Anguttara Nikaya 6.46) - This discourse describes the six qualities that are conducive to hearing the Dhamma, including being born in a time and place where the teachings are available, having the opportunity to hear the teachings, and having a receptive mind.
- Pabbajja Sutta (Anguttara Nikaya 9.5) - This discourse describes the benefits of renouncing worldly life and devoting oneself to practice, including the opportunity to hear the Dhamma.
- Rathavinita Sutta (Majjhima Nikaya 24) - This discourse compares the rarity of the opportunity to hear the Dhamma to the difficulty of finding a one-eyed turtle in a vast ocean.

In the preceding Suttas, particularly the *Mangala Sutta* and the *Adiya Sutta*, the Buddha explains the things that are most beneficial for insuring positive results for one's life. The Pali word "*mangala*" is a noun that means 'favorable,' 'positive,' or 'propitious.' The word is derived from the root "*mangal*," which means "to prosper," and is often associated with positive qualities or events that are believed to bring about prosperity, happiness, or success. In the context of the Dhamma, the term "*mangala*" is often used to refer to the highest favorable actions that one can cultivate on the path to liberation, such as moral virtue, wisdom, and compassion. In this sutta the Buddha explains the most beneficial and favorable actions one can learn:

- Not consorting with fools, consorting with the wise, paying respect and tribute to those worthy of it.
- Broad knowledge, skill, well-mastered discipline, well-spoken words.
- Being heedful of the qualities of the mind.
- Respectfulness, humility, contentment, gratitude, and timely hearing of the Dhamma.
- Patience, compliance, recognition of those who have left off living in the world and to those who are pursuing Dhamma practice.
- Comprehending the Noble Truths, and the realization of Nibbana.
- A mind that's unshaken, unblemished, and secure.

- To whatever extent you can, recognition of the happiness of those who are blameless.

Dhamma: How You Hear it and From Whom You Hear it is Important

When Adiya asked the Buddha, “How, venerable sir, does one develop direct knowledge?” Buddha replied:

‘It is by hearing the Dhamma from someone who has direct knowledge of it, Adiya, that one develops direct knowledge. And it is by developing direct knowledge that one’s doubts are dispelled, and one attains to the stage of confidence so that one may attain to the knowledge and vision of the Dhamma oneself.’

The *Adiya Sutta* is important because in it the Buddha emphasizes the importance of hearing the Dhamma from someone who has direct knowledge of it. The benefit of doing so is made clear here as well when the Buddha states that hearing the Dhamma from someone who has direct knowledge of it is **how** one is able to develop confidence in order to attain the *vision* (pañña/comprehension) understanding (ñāṇa) of the Dhamma.

One who claims to follow the teachings of the Buddha, and makes statements with regard to Buddhism or the Buddha Dhamma, presents themselves as one who has direct knowledge of the Dhamma. Therefore, such a person has a greater responsibility and a greater obligation to understand and follow both “right speech (*samma vaca*)” and “right views (*sammā-ditṭhi*).”

In the context of the Noble Eightfold Path, “right view” and “right speech” are two aspects of practicing the Dhamma, especially as a teacher of Dhamma, that are essential for cultivating wisdom and understanding. “Right view” involves understanding the nature of reality, including the Four Noble Truths and the Three Characteristics of Existence,⁶⁰ while “right speech” involves communicating truthfully and *harmlessly*. Therefore, based on the teachings of the Buddha, the claim that the Dhamma represents a religion is not in line with the true nature and purpose of the Dhamma teachings, and could be seen as an infringement on “right view” and “right speech” of the Noble Eightfold Path. Specifically, making such a claim without providing specific facts based on an ontological examination in order to satisfy the burden of proof could be seen as an infringement on “right view.” By promoting a view of the Dhamma that is not in line with the Buddha’s teachings, is an infringement on “right speech,” particularly if one is communicating employing half-truths, omission of facts, or distortions of the Buddha’s original teachings to satisfy one’s own viewpoint.

⁶⁰ Three Characteristics of Existence: Anicca (impermanence), Dukkha (suffering or unsatisfactoriness), Anatta (non-self or no-self).

Therefore, it is important for those who make claims about the nature of the Dhamma to base them on a clear understanding of the Buddha's teachings and to provide evidence and reasoning that is in line with the principles set forth in the Noble Eightfold Path.

Furthermore, the claim that the Dhamma represents religion could be seen as an infringement on "right view," if it is understood to imply that the Buddha's teachings are equivalent to faith-based religious traditions, or that they involve veneration or worship of supernatural or divine beings. From the perspective of the Buddha's teachings, however, the Dhamma is not a religion in the conventional sense, but rather a set of teachings and practices that are intended to lead to the cessation of suffering and the attainment of enlightenment. In this respect, the claim that the Dhamma represents a religion could be seen as a misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the Buddha's teachings, and as such, could be considered an infringement on "right view" by promoting a view of the Dhamma that is not in line with the Buddha's original teachings.

Claiming that the Dhamma represents a religion violates the principles of "right speech" by promoting untruths, half-truths, distortions, and a misapplication of the true purpose of the Buddha's original teachings. This claim could lead to confusion and misunderstanding of the Buddha's intended purpose. Therefore, such a claim may be considered an infringement of "right view" and "right speech," especially if it involves promoting incorrect views.

Contemplative Questions

When evaluating the claim that the Buddha Dhamma is a religion, it is important to consider its emphasis on individual experience and self-discovery. The Dhamma is not dependent on supernatural entities, rituals, or otherworldly beings. Instead, it encourages individuals to seek truth through understanding the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path for the sole purpose of understanding the suffering one experiences in their own life. To classify the Dhamma as a religion solely based on faith-based Judeo-Christian models overlooks the unique and practical nature of the Dhamma. Any label given to the Buddha Dhamma should consider a comprehensive understanding of its teachings, practices, and philosophy, rather than on preconceived notions of what constitutes a religion in the modern conventional sense.

Consider: The teachings of the Buddha strive to relieve suffering by means of the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path, which center around ethical conduct, mindfulness, and wisdom, without reliance upon worship of deities, supernatural entities or religious rituals. The Dhamma does not require an association with supernatural entities, but instead directs one to build a relationship with one's own life in order to comprehend the root cause of suffering.

Any claim that the Dhamma can be classified as a religion in the typical sense is refuted by the fact that the entire focus of the Dhamma is on pragmatic application and direct personal experience, which distinguish the purpose of the Dhamma from the practices of conventional religion. The Dhamma is unique in that it is based on direct experience rather than theory, conjecture or opinion, providing a methodology for understanding and achieving the ultimate goal of liberation from suffering and death.^{61|62|63|64|65|66|67|68}

Consider: The claim that the Judeo-Christian tradition established the modern definition of religion is universally accepted, but does remain a matter of debate among scholars. However, it is widely acknowledged that the concept of religion dates to very ancient times, with the earliest evidence of religious practices dating back to between 7500 BCE and 6400 BCE.⁶⁹

Regarding the categorization of the Buddha Dhamma as a religion, it is important to note that the Buddha's teachings predate the development of faith-based religious models by thousands of years and do not fit within the modern-day framework used to define religion. The Buddha lived in a time before the contemporary meaning and concepts of 'religion' existed, and the application of this definition to the Buddha's teachings is therefore anachronistic.

While some may want to categorize Buddhism as a religion, the entire focus of the Buddha's original teachings is on practical application and direct personal experience, which clearly sets it apart from the foundations of traditional religious practices. The Dhamma, or the Buddha's teachings, were developed in a specific historical and cultural context, and as such, cannot be fully understood or appreciated without an understanding of that context. Attempts to impose modern concepts or definitions onto the Dhamma results in a distorted or incomplete understanding and does not capture the true nature and purpose of the Dhamma.

Moreover, the fact that the Buddha's teachings emphasize the importance of direct personal experience and practical application, rather than abstract concepts or dogmatic beliefs, is a crucial aspect to consider. By over-focus on modern concepts or definitions, one risks losing sight of the practical and experiential aspects of the Dhamma, which are central to its true nature and purpose.

61 Branches of Philosophy: Src: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outline_of_philosophy

62 Traditionalism: Def Src: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traditionalist_School_\(perennialism\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traditionalist_School_(perennialism))

63 Structuralism: Def Src: <https://www.britannica.com/science/structuralism-psychology>

64 Empiricism: Def Src: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empiricism>

65 Rationalism: Def Src: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rationalism>

66 Transcendentalism: Def Src: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/transcendentalism/> | <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transcendentalism>

67 Naturalism: Def Src: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/naturalism/> | <https://iep.utm.edu/naturali/>

68 Pragmatism: Def Src: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pragmatism/> | <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pragmatism>

⁶⁹ **Çatalhöyük:** Earliest known expression of religious activity. Src: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%87atalh%C3%B6y%C3%BCk>

Therefore, it is extremely important to approach the Dhamma with an open mind and a willingness to learn from the teachings themselves, rather than imposing preconceived notions or modern concepts onto them. By taking the Dhamma at face value, one can gain a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the Buddha's teachings and their potential for transforming one's life and understanding of the world.

Employing a Soteriological Approach

The study of 'soteriology'⁷⁰ is intriguing. Its suffix (-ology⁷¹) implies that it is a subject of scientific study. The Greek word *soteria* literally means 'to save' or 'to preserve.' In the year 1200, the Latin Church adopted the use of the Greek word *soteria*, in its Latin form *salvatio*, which was retooled to refer to the salvation of the soul, liberation from the power of sin, and admission to eternal heavenly bliss.⁷² Over time, through consistent usage by the church, the meaning of the Latinized word *salvatio* was further developed and firmly grounded. From ancient Greek times to the establishment of Constantinian Christianity in the 4th century CE, the meaning of the word *salvatio* was instrumental in both the doctrines and dogmatism of salvation regarding the soul.

Christianity's adaptation and adoption of the ancient Greek and Hebrew concepts of salvation, specifically the Hebrew⁷³ supernatural entity known as *yāša* (יָשָׁא - *yaw-shah*) (Yahveh), have evolved into the linguistic and conceptual foundations of the modern-day religious concept of salvation. And, according to ancient Midianite beliefs,⁷⁴ human salvation was believed to be controlled by a supernatural volcano deity known as YHWH or Yahve (Yahweh/Jehovah) (ancient Egyptian *Yhw3*).⁷⁵ This concept was later adopted by the ancient Hebrews, which then evolved through the early Latin Church and eventually to Islam. Despite the role of human agency, salvation was primarily attributed to this supernatural entity.

70 Soteriology: "Salvation theory occupies a place of special significance in many religions. In the academic field of religious studies, soteriology is understood by scholars as representing a key theme in a number of different religions and is often studied in a comparative context; that is, comparing various ideas about what salvation is and how it is obtained." Src: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soteriology>

71 -ology -logy Etymology word-forming element meaning "a speaking, discourse, treatise, doctrine, theory, science," from Greek -logia (often via French -logie or Medieval Latin -logia), from -log-, combining form of *legein* "to speak, tell;" thus, "the character or deportment of one who speaks or treats of (a certain subject);" from PIE root *leg- (1) "to collect, gather," with derivatives meaning "to speak (to 'pick out words')." Often via Medieval Latin -logia, French -logie. In philology "love of learning; love of words or discourse," apology, doxology, analogy, trilogy, etc., Greek *logos* "word, speech, statement, discourse" is directly related. <https://www.etymonline.com/word/-ology> |

72 Salvation Etymology- <https://www.etymonline.com/word/Salvation>

73 *yāša* (יָשָׁא - *yaw-shah*) <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3467/kjv/wlc/0-1/>

74 Midianite- Kenite Hypothesis | https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kenite_hypothesis

75 *Yhw3* -ancient Egyptian YHWH | <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/yahweh-before-israel/midianite-hypothesis/7EACD32669EAAFD355E3A3F770E83765>

[None but God can save (Isaiah 43:14; Hosea 1:7). He [god] is the keeper of his flock (Ezekiel 34) and on Him alone one waits for a saving word to penetrate the silence (Psalm 62). Idolatry is an illusion, for the salvation of Israel is in the Lord (Jeremiah 3:23). Salvation is something to stand and watch, for "The Lord will fight for you; and you need only be still." (Exodus 14:13). "In repentance and rest is your salvation; in quietness and trust is your strength," summons Isaiah (Isaiah 30:15). The content of God's salvation includes personal and national deliverance from one's enemies, deliverance from slavery (Deuteronomy 24:18), ongoing protection and protection from evil (Psalm 121), escape from death (Psalm 68:19), healing (Psalm 69:29; Jeremiah 17:14), inheritance of land, descendants, and long life.]⁷⁶

One concept of salvation in reference to preservation may perhaps be valid, but using it in terms of a science of salvation is wholly an inappropriate application. Soteriology, as it is used today, is specifically designed for comparing various theistic philosophies of salvation and how salvation is achieved. The Judeo-Christian concept of salvation or redemption is not present in the Buddha Dhamma, making a soteriological approach not only inappropriate, but irrelevant. Despite this, some followers still insist that Buddhism is a religion by misapplying modern soteriological meaning. The current concept of salvation is closely tied to faith-based religious beliefs in the existence of a human soul, as Bhikkhu Bodhi explains in his publication *"Toward a Threshold of Understanding,"*⁷⁷ wherein he states that according to the Catholic Church:

"The Buddhist tradition and the methods deriving from it have an almost exclusively negative soteriology (doctrine of salvation)." Such a view of the Dhamma teachings was widespread among Christian missionaries in Asia during the 19th century, serving to justify their evangelical incursions into the heartlands of Buddhism.

Serious scholars of comparative religion have long recognized this view to be a misrepresentation, rooted, in the case of the early missionaries, partly in misunderstanding, partly in deliberate distortion. It is therefore puzzling that the present head of the Catholic Church, otherwise so well informed, should repeat these worn-out lines, particularly at a time when greater mutual understanding is expected from the leaders of different religions. The Pope does not explain exactly why he regards Buddhist soteriology as negative. Most likely, he takes this view because the Buddhist path of deliverance does not recognize a personal God as the agent and end of salvation."

The Dhamma taught by the Buddha does not involve seeking salvation or redemption through divine intervention, which is a central aspect of many faith-based religions. Instead, the Dhamma focuses on personal experience as the path to gaining knowledge, understanding, and eventual release from suffering, which is promulgated by one's own actions based on correct understanding.

⁷⁶ Salvation-Ancient Hebrew- Old Testament | <https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/salvation/>

⁷⁷ *Toward a Threshold to Understanding*, Bhikkhu Bodhi 1998 | https://accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/bodhi/bps-essay_30.html

Dhamma teachings emphasize that one's release from suffering is solely the responsibility of the individual and not dependent on any divine intervention by supernatural deities or personages. The Dhamma encourages individuals to use their own strength and determination to achieve an awakening, creating a mental transformation that changes how one reacts to life's inevitabilities, such as the cycle of *samsara*. In the Buddha's teachings, *samsara* defines the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth that all living beings are subject to. It is a fundamental concept that is central to understanding the nature of existence and the nature of the human condition.

According to the Buddha Dhamma, all living beings are bound to the cycle of *samsara* by the force of *kamma* (karma), which is the law of cause and effect. Every action that one takes, whether mental, verbal, or physical, has consequences that lead to future rebirths and perpetuate the cycle of suffering.

This cycle of *samsara* is characterized by the experience of *dukkha* (dissatisfaction or suffering), which is considered to be inherent in all conditioned phenomena. The cycle of *samsara* is perpetuated by craving and attachment, which bind one to the cycle of birth and rebirth, hindering and preventing one from attaining complete liberation from this cycle. It is the entire goal of the Buddha's teachings to help one understand how to break free from this cycle. This is achieved through the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path, which emphasizes ethical conduct, mindfulness, and wisdom as a means of gaining the understanding and insight needed to transcend this cycle and attain the ultimate goal of Nibbana or Nirvana.

To truly understand the essence of the Dhamma, one must experience the super-normal results of practicing the Four Noble Truths. *Super-normal* refers to experiences that are beyond the ordinary or mundane understanding we have about life. Super-normal experiences develop as a result of practice of certain qualities, such as mental concentration, mindfulness, and wisdom, which are cultivated through the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path. Another way to phrase "super-normal" is that the results that are experienced from practicing the Four Noble Truths go beyond mere intellectual understanding by penetrating one's mental faculties. This means that a person who practices the Four Noble Truths undergoes a mental transformation resulting in the ability to see the world as it really is.

According to the Buddha, this path involves the development of super-normal qualities (*abhijjha*), which can lead to experiences such as insight into the nature of reality, the attainment of deep states of mental concentration, effective meditation, and the cultivation of qualities such as right intention, right speech and right views. While these experiences are considered to be super-normal, they are not supernatural nor are they mystical in nature. Rather, they arise from the natural development of the mind through practice. In this sense, the phrase "super-normal" refers to experiences that are beyond the ordinary or mundane, but are attainable through the natural development of the mind and the cultivation of the qualities that are necessary for real and effective practice.

Comparing the Dhamma to theistic religions from a soteriological perspective reveals significant differences in beliefs and practices. The use of the word "salvation" in translations of the Pāli texts may have some familiarity with modern conventional concepts, but it does not align with the traditional meaning in theistic religions and does not accurately reflect the teachings of liberation by the Buddha. Imposing modern concepts of salvation onto the concept of liberation is not only a misappropriation, but is inappropriate in order to prove that such an application is either valid or viable. There exists no reference, inference or implication within the Dhamma that mirrors any elements of the modern conventional concepts of salvation similar to those found in theistic faith-based religious beliefs.

Misunderstandings about the Buddha's teachings often arise from attempts to apply modern faith-based religious concepts onto the Dhamma. The use of the word 'salvation' in such arguments is a prime example of this. The meaning of the word, in a soteriological context, is not applicable to the Buddha's teachings and creates confusion about the true nature of liberation as taught by the Buddha. The Buddha taught that liberation from suffering and the cycle of samsara is achieved through knowledge and understanding of the Four Noble Truths, and not through the intercession of supernatural beings as salvation is in faith-based religions. This was made clear in the *Majjhima Nikaya* (22), where the Buddha directly addressed this misinterpretation.

"There are, monks, some recluses and brahmins who charge me with being an annihilationist, saying that the recluse Gotama teaches the annihilation of an existent being [a self]. That is false misrepresentation. What I teach, in the past as also now, is suffering and the cessation of suffering."

This verse makes it evident that the Buddha warned against stubbornly holding onto views. The belief that the Dhamma or the Buddha represents a religion in the same meaning as the world's faith-based religions, is manifestly false representation of the Dhamma that creates distorted knowledge, views and misunderstandings.

Dogmatically adhering to the idea that the Buddha Dhamma was taught as a religion is clinging to an incorrect erroneous view. That the Buddha refused to answer certain questions is evident in the Pali texts. However, it is important to understand why he did not answer questions of a speculative nature. We can extend the Buddha's reasoning to the speculative claim that what the Buddha taught is representative of the modern conventional concept of religion.

His refusal to answer certain questions was based on his understanding that they were not conducive to the attainment of liberation. The Buddha's teachings were aimed at helping people to understand the nature of suffering and how to transcend it, and he believed that answering certain questions could lead to speculation, attachment, and distraction from this goal.

The Buddha often emphasized the importance of focusing on the practical aspects of his teachings, *rather than getting bogged down in speculative or theoretical debates*. He believed that such debates were a distraction from the path to liberation, which only leads to confusion, attachment, and more suffering. Furthermore, the Buddha believed that many of the questions that were posed to him were based on assumptions and presuppositions that were not in line with the truth of the nature of reality. He believed that answering these questions would only serve to reinforce these assumptions and would not lead to a deeper understanding of the Dhamma. He emphasized the importance of focusing on the practical aspects of cultivating the qualities of ethical conduct, mindfulness, and wisdom that are necessary for attaining liberation from suffering.

Buddha's example provides us with the ability to apply his reasoning in order to determine whether or not the Buddha or the Dhamma is in-fact representative of the modern concept of religion. "Is what the Buddha taught a religion?" Considering what the Buddha taught, we therefore ask: *"Is this question or the answer itself conducive to an individual's aspirations to achieve liberation from suffering?"*

The Buddha's own viewpoint makes it evident that the very intent to be concerned with the question of whether his teachings represent religion or not, is superfluous. The question of whether or not the Dhamma, the Buddha or Buddhism in general constitutes a religion may be of interest to some scholars or philosophers, but according to the teachings of the Buddha, this question is not considered to be of any importance with regard to the goal of liberation taught in the Dhamma.

Again, one's focus should be on the Buddha's emphasis on the practical and pragmatic application of the Dhamma to cultivate the qualities that are necessary for the attainment of one's release from suffering. These qualities include ethical conduct, mindfulness, and wisdom, which are developed through the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path. Buddha did not focus on the question of whether or not the Dhamma constitutes a religion because the modern-day conventional concept of religion simply was non-existent at that time. Rather, he emphasized the practical application of his teachings and their ability to transform the lives of those who follow the path to liberation.

Therefore, while the question of whether or not the Dhamma constitutes a religion may be of interest to some, it is not considered to be of real importance with regard to the goal of liberation taught by the Buddha, and should be of absolutely no importance whatsoever to one who claims to follow the Buddha or practice the Path. The focus of the Buddha's teachings is on the practical application of the Noble Eightfold Path to cultivate the qualities that are necessary for the attainment of liberation, rather than on the categorization of the Dhamma as a religion or non-religion.

The Problem: Suffering. The Solution: Experience.

The Dhamma teachings in the Pali texts, particularly the Four Noble Truths, identifies and clarifies the main challenge faced by humanity; *Dukkha* (doo-kah), which encompasses distress, dissatisfaction, suffering, and anything that causes anxiety. The solution can be found in the “Fourth” Noble Truth, which is known as the Eightfold Noble Path. Rather than relying solely on faith in the teaching, the solution to *dukkha* is realized through the actual experience of practicing the elements outlined within the Noble Eightfold Path. This path enables individuals to gain insight into the truth about themselves and their lives. Results are only experienced through practical application, in that one begins to comprehend the truth about themselves and their own life, free from conventional mental constructs, labels, and doctrines. This is the essence of awakening to truth about the nature of reality, not just blindly adhering to views, philosophies, and one’s own opinions or labels.

One of the key teachings of the Buddha focuses on freeing individuals from their erroneous belief in a permanent self, which is at the very heart of human suffering. All human beings maintain, in varying degrees, some more than others, a self-centeredness that is concerned with the preservation of all aspects of one’s life. The Dhamma aims to achieve three interrelated objectives, each built on its own set of principles to cater to different stages of mental growth and varying levels of understanding. This holistic approach to one’s mental development is embodied in the Dhamma enabling it to guide individuals towards liberation. The three helpful and beneficial ‘goods’ are interrelated and are:

- 1) **Focus on What is Good:** The good pertaining to the present life (*ditthadhammattha*), refers to the experience of direct knowledge or insight into the nature of reality. It is often translated as “*the visible object of knowledge*” or “*the ultimate reality that can be directly experienced.*” *Ditthadhammattha* (*dee-tha-dhamma-attha*) is understood to be the direct perception or realization of the true nature of existence, which is characterized by the three marks of existence: impermanence (*anicca*), unsatisfactoriness or suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anatta*). This direct knowledge or insight is considered to be a necessary part of the path to be able to realize a release from suffering, as it enables one to see things as they really are, free from delusion and attachment. *Ditthadhammattha* is not something that can be attained through speculation, theory, or dogma, but is rather the result of direct personal experience through diligent and persistent practice. It is considered to be a super-normal state of consciousness that can be cultivated through the practice of meditation and the development of mindfulness and wisdom. Ultimately, the concept of *ditthadhammattha* is a central part of the path to liberation, as it represents the direct knowledge and insight that is necessary to overcome ignorance and attachment and attain the ultimate goal of liberation.

- 2) **Forward Realization of Good:** *Samparayikattha* (*Sahm-pah-rah-yee-kah-tha*) is the good that pertains to one's future life and refers to the transcendent nature of ultimate reality, beyond conventional everyday experience. It is related to the concept of direct knowledge of ultimate reality, but emphasizes that ultimate reality cannot be fully expressed through language or concepts. It is characterized by impermanence, suffering, and non-self, which can only be fully realized through direct personal experience and insight. *Samparayikattha* highlights the importance of direct experience and diligent practice in realizing the ultimate truth of one's own life and the source of one's suffering.

- 3) **The Ultimate Good:** *Paramattha* refers to the ultimate or absolute reality of existence. It is often translated as "ultimate reality", "ultimate truth" or "ultimate principle." In this teaching, *paramattha* (*pah-rah-mah-tha*) is closely related to the concept of the three marks of existence: impermanence, unsatisfactoriness or suffering, and non-self. These three marks are considered to be the ultimate true characteristics of existence, and the realization of these truths in connection with one's own life is central to understanding and comprehension of the purpose of the Path. *Paramattha* is sometimes contrasted with the concept of *sammuti* or conventional reality. *Sammuti* (*sahm-moo-tee*) refers to the world of conventional or relative reality, which is shaped by concepts, language, and social conventions. It is often translated as "convention", "conventional reality", or "conventional truth." According to the Buddha, the world of *sammuti* is not the ultimate reality, but rather a provisional and relative reality that is shaped by our perceptions, concepts, and language. The concepts and conventions of *sammuti*, of course, are necessary for communication and interaction with others, but they can also lead to confusion, attachment, and suffering when taken too seriously or mistaken for the ultimate reality. The concept of *sammuti* is important because it underscores the need to penetrate beyond the surface level of conventional reality in order to realize the ultimate truth of existence. It reminds us that the world we experience through our senses and concepts is *not the ultimate reality*, and that the *ultimate reality can only be realized* through direct personal experience and insight.
 - a. *Paramattha* is important because it emphasizes the necessity of penetrating beyond the surface level of conventional reality and conventional beliefs in order to realize the ultimate truth of existence. The ultimate truth of existence is the condition of things as they actually are. It reminds us that the world we experience through our senses and concepts is not the ultimate reality, and that the ultimate reality can only be realized through direct personal experience and insight that goes beyond mere conventional thinking.

Once again, I return to the questions that the claim the Buddha and his teachings constitute religion have generated. Thus far, have you read anything that indicates to you that this claim is true? Based on what you have read thus far, would you be more inclined to consider that such a claim is a misappropriation of the concept of religion? Has what you have read thus far indicated to you that the teachings of the Buddha are in line with religions such as Protestantism, Catholicism, Judaism, and Islamism? Might you now be more willing to consider that to label the Buddha and his teachings as a religion, a wrong view? Would you be more likely to consider that labeling the Buddha and his teachings a religion represents a claim that clearly is not accurate? Keep these questions in mind as you read on.

About the word “Spiritual” and “Spirituality”

In the Pali language, the word the Buddha chose to convey the concept of “spiritual” is “*adhyātma*” or “*adhipaññā*,” and the word he chose to use to convey “spirituality” is “*adhyātma-vāda*” or “*adhipaññā-vāda*.” The terms “*adhyātma*” (*ahd-yaht-mah*) or “*adhipaññā*” (*ahd-hee-pah-nyah*) were used by the Buddha to refer to the **psychological and mental aspects of life**. These aspects of one’s mental conditions is translated as “supramundane (*lokuttara*)” or “transcendental.” Supramundane is not a common word. It refers to something that is beyond the world of ordinary experience or mundane conventional reality and beliefs.

In the context of the Buddha’s teachings, “supramundane” refers to the ultimate goal of one’s mental or psychological path, which is liberation from suffering and the realization of Nibbana, a state of unconditioned peace and happiness that is beyond the limitations of conventional experience. Supramundane is contrasted with the mundane, which refers to the world of ordinary experience and conventional reality. *While the mundane is characterized by impermanence, suffering, and non-self, the supramundane represents the ultimate reality that transcends these limitations.* In relation to one’s path, the supramundane involves the development of wisdom, morality, and meditation, which are just three aspects of the Noble Eightfold Path. Through these practices, one gradually cultivates confidence in one’s capacity to transcend the limitations of conventional thinking and experience, and to realize the ultimate truth of existence. Additionally, *adhyātma* or *adhipaññā* are closely related to the concept of *paramattha*, which refers to the ultimate reality or ultimate truth of existence. While conventional reality is shaped by concepts, language, and social conventions, *adhyātma* or *adhipaññā* represents the ultimate reality beyond the limits of conventional thinking and experience. Neither of these Pali words has anything in common with the conventional religious concept of “spirituality.”

The path to liberation involves cultivating direct knowledge gained from practice, known as *adhyātma* or *adhipaññā*, which emphasizes transcending conventional thinking to realize the ultimate truth of existence. Developing wisdom and surpassing the limits of conventional thinking and perception are essential for the journey towards liberation.

What Does “Realizing the Ultimate Truth of Existence” Mean?

In the Buddha's teachings, the "*realization of the truth of suffering*," which is the First Noble Truth, refers to gaining a profound understanding and embracing the *nature of suffering*. This includes recognizing that suffering is an integral part of human existence and arises from various sources such as craving, attachment, and ignorance. This realization entails accepting the reality of suffering in oneself and in the world around us, and acknowledging that all beings are subject to its influence. It also involves recognizing the various types of suffering, such as physical pain, emotional distress, and the existential despair that stems from the impermanence and uncertainty of life. Ultimately, the realization of the truth of suffering is a crucial step on one's individual path towards liberation, as it involves recognizing the fundamental unsatisfactoriness of mundane existence and the need to seek a more profound and lasting form of happiness. By embracing the reality of suffering and its causes, one can begin to cultivate the wisdom and compassion necessary to move beyond it and attain a state of understanding what real release and inner peace is like to experience.

What is the nature of human suffering? What are the elements of human suffering? According to the Buddha's teachings, the elements of suffering are often referred to as the Three Poisons or Three Unwholesome Roots, which are the root causes of suffering:

1. ***Craving*** (tanha) - the desire for things we don't have or the clinging to things we do have. This leads to dissatisfaction and suffering when those things are lost or unavailable.
2. ***Attachment*** (upadana) - the emotional attachment to things, people, beliefs and opinions, which can lead to suffering when we experience loss or separation from them.
3. ***Ignorance*** (avijja) - the belief in a self or ego that is separate from the rest of existence, which creates a sense of isolation, suffering and the strong desire to preserve what we have and believe.

In addition to these three poisons, there are also three types of suffering, which are:

1. ***Dukkha-dukkha*** - the suffering of physical pain or discomfort, such as illness or injury.
2. ***Viparinama-dukkha*** - the suffering of change or impermanence, which arises when things we desire or cling to are inevitably lost or changed.
3. ***Sankhara-dukkha*** - the suffering of conditioned existence, which stems from the underlying unsatisfactoriness of all conditioned phenomena and the persistent feeling of dissatisfaction or unfulfillment.

It is not enough to merely recognize or acknowledge the fact that all humans suffer these things. One must understand or realize and mentally accept specific instances of how these things apply to your own life. So, not merely to intellectually accept that these things are or may be true, but to see real life examples, taken from your own life, in order to understand how and why these things are true.

In terms of everyday living, the statement, *realization of the truth of suffering*, means that we need to recognize that suffering is an unavoidable part of life, and that it can arise from various sources. Whether it be physical pain, emotional distress, or the anxiety and uncertainty that comes with the impermanence of all things, suffering is an inherent part of the human experience.

Moreover, this statement highlights the importance of recognizing the root causes of suffering, namely craving, attachment, and ignorance. We often experience suffering when we become attached to things that are impermanent and subject to change, such as material possessions, relationships, or our own sense of self. By recognizing these attachments and the underlying ignorance that fuels them, we can begin to develop the wisdom necessary to move beyond them and achieve a state of mental awareness and clarity about the reality of life.

Everyone knows that there is suffering, and everyone knows that certain things are the cause of suffering, but aside from knowing what things cause you to experience suffering, do you know why? Understanding “why” certain things cause you to suffer is not as easy to know as you might initially think. For example, you will suffer when you look in the mirror and realize that your once youthful body is beginning to show signs of aging. We all experience this. So, “why” does this cause you to suffer dissatisfaction, worry or anxiety? The “why,” is because you are attached to a vision, a concept, a belief about yourself and it is this attachment that is the real cause of your dissatisfaction and anxiety, not that your body is aging, after all you’ve known this for decades, right? This one thing is the “truth about the nature of reality.”

To understand this involves practicing mindful awareness, and cultivating an understanding of our own thoughts, emotions, desires and beliefs. By doing so, we can begin to recognize the ways in which our attachments and delusions contribute to our suffering, and work towards letting go of these sources of dissatisfaction, becoming settled to the truth of your reality.

One experience of realizing the root cause of suffering could be when someone goes through a relationship breakup. During the relationship, you became attached to your partner and invested a lot of time and energy into the relationship. However, when the relationship ends, you experienced intense emotional pain, leading to feelings of sadness, anger, despair or anxiety.

Applying the First Noble Truth through meditation, contemplation and analysis, you come to realize that your attachment to your partner was the root cause of your suffering. You realize that your sense of self-worth and happiness became tied to the relationship, and that losing the relationship felt like a loss of a part of yourself. In this way, your attachment led to an unhealthy dependence on the relationship, which ultimately resulted in your suffering when it ended.

Through this experience, you came to understand that the attachment itself is the root cause of suffering, and begin to work towards developing the wisdom and self-awareness necessary to let go of attachments and cultivate a more stable and resilient sense of inner mental stability.

This does not mean that you put up a wall of detachment, never trusting in another relationship. Instead, you learn to view a romantic relationship without becoming overly attached and dependent by cultivating a sense of self-awareness, equanimity (neutral balance), and independence.

Self-awareness involves being mindfully aware of your own thoughts, emotions, and desires, and being honest with yourself about your own needs and boundaries. By maintaining a strong sense of self and identity, you can avoid becoming overly dependent on your partner for your sense of happiness.

Equanimity involves maintaining a balanced and even-minded attitude towards the ups and downs of the relationship. This means acknowledging the impermanence and uncertainty of all things, including relationships, and being mindful of the potential for change and uncertainty in the future.

Independence involves respecting each other's boundaries and allowing each other the freedom to pursue personal interests and goals outside of the relationship. This means maintaining a sense of individuality and self-sufficiency, while also being open, supportive and compassionate towards one another's life.

By cultivating this mental state of clarity, you can approach a future romantic relationship with a healthy and balanced perspective, one that is less likely to lead to excessive attachment and dependence, and more likely to promote mutual respect, trust, satisfaction and happiness. This is what the "*realization of the truth of suffering*" means.

Now, returning to the topic of the English word "spiritual;" While the Pali terms "*adhyātma*" or "*adhipaññā*" may appear to share some similarity with the English word "spiritual," this is due to those early translators who chose the word "spiritual" in an attempt to convey the meaning of these Pali words. However, it is important to understand that the Pali words have an opposite contextual meaning of the word "spiritual" and "spirituality." In the context of Dhamma philosophy, the term "spiritual" carries a distinct meaning that differs from the conventional connotations associated with the English words "spiritual" and "spirituality." In Dhamma philosophy, "spiritual" refers to an individual's connection to their own level of consciousness and understanding, and does not imply any religious or mystical associations that may be commonly associated with the term. Therefore, spirituality in Dhamma philosophy is directly linked to one's mental states of consciousness.

Also, in Dhamma philosophy, spirituality refers to experiences and practices that are focused on personal growth, self-awareness, and inner peace, and involves a sense of connection to one's consciousness. In general, spirituality is concerned with questions about the meaning and purpose of life. In the Aṅguttara Nikāya 4.15, "The Book of the Fours," titled "*Brahmacariya Vagga*," which literally means the "highest or most supreme way of life," was translated as "The Spiritual Life."

This translation is actually incorrect. The Buddha wasn't defining the "spiritual" life at all. He was defining a supramundane life; the characteristics and conditions of a most excellent or best life. All Pali passages where the English word "spiritual" was used in order to make what the Buddha said palatable to Western minds, has limited the Buddha's true purpose of such teachings. Use of the English word "spiritual" shrinks the true meaning of many of the Buddha's teachings, limiting them to a narrow understanding, incorrectly associating the religious connotations of what the English word "spiritual" or "spirituality" implies or infers.

*"Bhikkhus, this [supramundane] life is **not lived for the sake of deceiving people and cajoling them**; nor for the benefit of gain, honor, and praise; nor for the benefit of winning in debates; nor with the thought: 'Let the people know me thus.' But rather, this **supreme way of life** is lived for the sake of restraint, abandoning, dispassion, and cessation."*

Where in this teaching is "religion" inferred? Yet, when the English word "spiritual" is applied to this quote, see what happens to the overall meaning and context.

*"Bhikkhus, this spiritual life is **not lived for the sake of deceiving people and cajoling them**; nor for the benefit of gain, honor, and praise; nor for the benefit of winning in debates; nor with the thought: 'Let the people know me thus.' But rather, this **spiritual life** is lived for the sake of restraint, abandoning, dispassion, and cessation."*

Now, applying not only the English word "spiritual," see what happens when we apply the claims of the armchair philosopher with the idea that what the Buddha taught is "religion."

*"O you, holy people, this **spiritual** life is **not lived for the sake of deceiving people and cajoling them**; nor for the benefit of gain, honor, and praise; nor for the benefit of converting people; nor with the thought: 'Let the people know me as a holy person.' But rather, this **spiritual way of life** is lived for the sake of restraint, abandoning, dispassion, and cessation."*

[The same Sutta in Pali: Na cāyaṃ, bhikkhave, **brahmacariyaṃ** vussati kummagge yāvatakaṃ ācariyūpajjhāyā na sākaṃ na kukkucçaṃ na hirī na ottappaṃ na patisāraṇaṃ na adhimānaṃ nātimaññitā na abbhakkhānaṃ nābhinivesānāpekkho; seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, nikkujjitaṃ vā bijaṃ khaṇḍitaṃ vā phalitaṃ vā bhesajjaṃ paccantimaṃ vātaṃ vā udakaṃ vā hāritaṃ vā sāyanhasamayaṃ vā paṭipajjitabbaṃ.]

The entire context of the quote changes it and infers religiosity. Changing the basic concepts of the teaching alters the context, whereby the above statement made by the Buddha could just as easily be attributed to Jesus or Muhammad. You can see how interjecting modern concepts into the teachings of the Buddha can seem to support the claim that what the Buddha taught was “religion.”

The term “spiritual” is inherently linked to religion due to its origins of the Latin word “spiritus,” meaning “breath.” In medieval Christianity, the term “spiritualitas” was used to describe a life lived according to the Holy Spirit, ultimately leading to spiritual perfection. Over time, the term became associated with religious practices and beliefs. The evolution of the word “spiritual” can be traced back to ancient Latin, Greek, and Hebrew words, all of which refer to the animating force that gives life to living things, namely the breath. However, Christianity transformed the original meaning of these words to suggest that faith in Jesus and the Christian God replaces the animating force of life. Over time, the contextual meaning of the word “spiritual” became associated with religious doctrine and dogma. It wasn't until the 19th century that the concept of spirituality began to expand beyond organized religion, as people sought spiritual experiences and practices outside of traditional religious traditions.

The association of the word “spiritual” with faith-based religion was strengthened throughout the Middle Ages, until the words “spiritual” and “spirituality” was primarily associated with a religious context. Although this has changed somewhat in modern-times, the meaning of the word “spiritual” has broadened to encompass a wide range of practices and experiences related to personal growth, well-being, and inner peace. However, the association with religion remains hopelessly conjoined, if only in a quasi-religious context.

To strictly associate the Buddha’s meaning of *adhyātma* or *adhipaññā* with the modern day meaning of “spiritual” or “spirituality,” is a misappropriation of these two words, and is wholly a misrepresentation of the concepts the Buddha was conveying. Additionally, this serves as another example of anachronism, i.e. retrofitting modern concepts onto the Dhamma and Pali words.

What the Buddha Said

Advocates for labeling the Buddha's teachings as “religion” rely on a narrow interpretation of the Pali Canon. They selectively reference certain texts without considering their context, promoting misinterpretations as factual evidence. A more accurate method of verifying the authenticity of a teaching is to consult early Pāli texts like the *Digha Nikaya*, particularly the section called “The Four Great References”⁷⁸ in the *Mahāparinibbana Sutta*. This portion establishes four criteria for evaluating whether a teaching can be attributed to the Buddha.

78 Four Great References: Digha Nikaya 16:7-11, Src:
<https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html#fn-37> |
<http://buddhism.org/Sutras/DHARMA/Tripitaka/parinibbanaSutta4.htm#4>

In the Pali texts, the Four Great References (*cattāro mahāparivāra*) refer to four standards or sources that a student of the Dhamma can rely upon to ascertain the validity of the teachings they encounter. By relying on these four references, a student can discern which teachings are in line with the Buddha's teachings and which are not. These four references are:

1. **The Buddha:** A follower can investigate whether the teaching in question is in accordance with the actual words of the Buddha in the Pali texts.
2. **The Dhamma:** A follower can examine whether a teaching is in line with the principles of the Dhamma as a whole.
3. **The Sangha:** A follower can verify whether the teaching is supported by the Sangha, or the community of monks or nuns.
4. **Reason and analysis:** A follower can use their own powers of reasoning and analysis to determine whether the teaching is reasonable and resulting in a beneficial understanding.

In my view, it is crucial to consider the teachings and explanations found in the *Abhidhamma Pitaka* and the *Visuddhimagga* when discussing this subject. Although some individuals, including monks and nuns, may dismiss the validity of these texts, the formula of the *Four Great References* can be employed by anyone to demonstrate their validity and homogeneity with the overall purpose of the Dhamma. In an exchange of email between myself and Bhikkhu Bodhi, he specifically commented on this matter.

"Modern Buddhist scholars distinguish between the period of what is called "Early Buddhism" or "Archaic Buddhism," and the period called "Sectarian Buddhism." Early Buddhism is represented by the four Nikayas of the Pāli Canon and the older portions of the Khuddaka Nikaya, the Vinaya Pitaka (at least the oldest portions of this), and by their counterparts from other schools preserved in Hybrid Sanskrit, Chinese translation, Gandhari, and other languages.

These texts, called "the Early Buddhist Texts," are most likely to come from the earliest period of Buddhist literary activity and thus to be closest to what the Buddha actually taught (but of this we can never be perfectly certain). Despite some differences in formulation, they set forth the same basic doctrinal positions and the same presentation of the practice, but without elaboration of details. Even then, there are differences, as can be seen in Analayo Bhikkhu's comparative study of the different versions of the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (in his book, Perspectives on Satipaṭṭhāna).

In the period of Sectarian Buddhism, the philosophical teachings and practices are elaborated in greater detail, but it is here that differences emerge between the schools. Each school, or at least several major schools, develops an Abhidhamma and composes treatises that explain the doctrine and practice in the ways distinctive of that school. In the Pāli school, there emerges in this period the seven-treatise Abhidhamma Pitaka, works like the Patisambhidamagga, the Niddesas, etc.

At a somewhat later stage during this period, the commentaries are composed, and the main themes of the commentaries are combined into the manuals such as the Vimuttimagga and the Visuddhimagga. Some monks (usually Western monks) want to take as authoritative only the texts that can be assigned to the period of Early Buddhism, and so they rely only on the older portion of the Nikayas, rejecting as authoritative not only the Abhidhamma and commentaries, but even texts like the Patisambhida, which might have been composed in the 2nd or 1st century BCE.”

In instances where an individual is not receiving teachings directly from the Pali texts, the advice given in the Dhamma is to thoroughly examine the teachings on one's own. This involves analyzing the words and phrases, referencing the suttas and checking their consistency with the philosophy of the Dhamma. If a teaching cannot be traced back to the suttas, they should be disregarded or at least questioned. The early Pāli texts also make a distinction between what is called *Neyyatha*, meaning teachings that need further explanation, and *Nītattha*, meaning teachings that are fully explained and need no further explanation. The *Neyyatha Sutta*⁷⁹ states:

"Monks, these two slanders the Tathagata.⁸⁰ Which two? He who explains a discourse whose meaning needs to be inferred as one whose meaning has already been fully drawn out. And he who explains a discourse whose meaning has already been fully drawn out as one whose meaning needs to be inferred. These are two who slander the Tathagata."

In this sutta, the Buddha is referring to the importance of understanding the true meaning of his teachings. He warns against two kinds of misrepresentations or slanders of his teachings, which can lead to misunderstandings and hinder one's progress on the path to mental awakening. The first kind of slander is when someone presents a discourse that requires interpretation and understanding, but instead implies that its meaning has already been fully explained as though it were fact. This means that the person *oversimplifies and overlooks the depth and complexity of the teachings*, leading to a shallow understanding of the Dhamma. This can result in misunderstandings and confusion, as the true meaning of the discourse is not fully grasped. The second kind of slander is when someone presents a discourse that has already been fully explained, but infers that its meaning requires further interpretation. When something has been completely explained by the Buddha the necessity to further explain it is unnecessary. This means that the person *overcomplicates and misconstrues the teachings, leading to a distorted understanding of the Dhamma*. This can result in confusion and misguided practices, as the true meaning of the discourse is obscured by unnecessary complexity.

79 Neyyatha Sutta: Src: https://www.dhammadatalks.org/suttas/AN/AN2_24.html

80 Tathagata: "He who has won through to the truth."

This sutta amplifies the distinction between conventional truth and ultimate truth, which is known as the '*Two Truths*' teaching in the Pali texts. Self-reflection on the results and effects of a particular teaching of one's experience and thoughts are a crucial factor in determining the teachings authenticity. The *Gotami Sutta*⁸¹ states that teachings leading to qualities such as impartiality (detachment, indifference, dispassion), decreased anxiety and contentment, indicates that the teachings are to be considered the Buddha's genuine instructions, while those leading to the opposite of these things are not genuine teachings. No matter how well something might be explained, if the Buddha did not teach it then it is not authentic.

I understand this Sutta to mean that if an *interpretation* or *explanation* of something the Buddha taught results in anxiety, confusion, bias, prejudice, partiality, favoritism, discrimination, partisanship and subjectivity, then the *interpretation* or *explanation* should not be considered as a genuine teaching of the Buddha. Therefore, results such as these, according to the Buddha, directly slander and disrespect his teachings. This is why I reject some of the Mahayana innovations that were added after the Buddha's death. The early Buddhist texts emphasize the connection between the interpretative work and spiritual practice, along with mindful awareness of the influence of our practices on our state of mind.

The *Gotami Sutta* serves as a cautionary tale against those who seek to manipulate or distort the Buddha's teachings for their own purposes. The act of altering or adding to a Dhamma teaching with the intention of aligning it with a point of view that is not in line with the Buddha's original teachings is a form of slandering and disrespecting the Dhamma. The assertion that the Buddha or the Dhamma can be considered a religion in the conventional sense is viewed as a mental construct (*mano-sankhāra*)⁸² and does not represent the Buddha's true teachings.

A notable example of this kind of manipulation is the elevation of the bodhisattva ideal to a central concept in Mahayana Buddhism. While the Pali texts are regarded by many Pali scholars, highly educated monks, and nuns as being the most accurate representation of the Buddha's teachings, there is a diversity of perspectives among scholars regarding the historical veracity and authenticity of the Mahayana sutras. Some scholars contend that, as these texts were written hundreds of years (between 500 and 900 years: 1st and 5th centuries CE) after the Buddha's time, they reflect a significant deviation from his original teachings.

81 **Gotami Sutta**: Src: <https://accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/an/an08/an08.053.than.html>

82 **Sankhara**: (Meaning) Def: "All saṅkhāra arises in the mind. When they lead to conscious thinking or speech, they are called vaci saṅkhāra. Those conscious thoughts that lead to bodily actions are kāya saṅkhāra. On the other hand, **manō saṅkhāra** arise automatically in the mind. Therefore, "san" is associated with anything that one is thinking about saying or doing. Src: <https://puredhamma.net/living-dhamma/nama-rupa-to-namarupa/four-mental-aggregates/sankhara-what-it-really-means/>

While the term "bodhisatta" is mentioned in early Buddhist texts, the Buddha did not teach it as a central concept or ideal. Instead, a bodhisatta is generally understood to be a person who is on the path to awakening but has not yet attained it. While the concept of the bodhisattva was not a prominent theme in the Pali texts, the Mahayana sutras contend that the Buddha taught the bodhisattva path, but these teachings were not included in the early Buddhist texts. According to this view, the Mahayana sutras offer a more comprehensive and complete expression of the Buddha's teachings, including instructions on the bodhisattva path. However, this is highly speculative and approaches the level of interpolation of the original Pali texts. In contrast to the Mahayana form of Buddhism, the Buddha primarily focused on teachings such as the Four Noble Truths and the Three Universal Truths in the Pali texts.

A closer analysis of the significant discrepancies between the Buddha's teachings and the beliefs and practices of the various forms of Buddhism that emerged after his death suggests a significant lack of comprehension of the Pāli language employed by the Buddha, mostly from lay practitioners. According to the Buddha, the root intent of actions is doubt, hatred, arrogance, and ignorance (*vicikicchā*,⁸³ *patigha*,⁸⁴ *mana* [mānasa],⁸⁵ and *avijjā*.⁸⁶) Following are a few examples where the modern understanding and practice of Buddhism differs from the Buddha's original teachings:

- **Ritual Devotional Practices:** Mahayana and Vajrayana, among other modern schools of Buddhism, have incorporated greater emphasis on rituals, devotional practices, and deity worship. Although not part of the Buddha's original teachings, these practices have been adopted in contemporary Buddhism due to the influence of cultural traditions and religious beliefs that emerged post-Buddha. In contrast, the Buddha emphasized practicality and simplicity. However, modern Mahayana and Vajrayana practices involve complex rituals, ceremonies, and offerings to bodhisattvas or deities, which contradicts the Buddha's emphasis on individual wisdom and insight as the path to liberation. In fact, the Buddha criticized the excessive use of rituals and ceremonies in the *Alagaddupama Sutta* (MN 22) and the *Dhammapada* (141-142).

83 **Vicikicchā:** [Vecikicchā] Pāli: विचिकिच्छ Def: "Doubting, uncertain; doubtful; perplexity." Src: https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/Pali_query.py?qs=vicikicch%C4%81&searchhws=yes&matchtype=exact

84 **Patigha:** Pāli: पटिघ Def: "[Ethically] Repulsion, repugnance, anger, collision; a psychological sensory reaction." Src: https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/Pali_query.py?qs=pa%E1%B9%ADigha&searchhws=yes&matchtype=exact

85 **Mana:** [mānasa] Pāli: (mana) मन्ना (manasa) मन्नास Def: "Mind [mana citta]; thought measured by conceit; pride; intention; having the intention of." Src: https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/Pali_query.py?page=519

86 **Avijjā:** Pāli: (Sanskrit अविज्ञ) Def: "Ignorance; error; the main root of evil and of continual rebirth." Src: https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/Pali_query.py?qs=avijj%C4%81&searchhws=yes&matchtype=exact

- **Monasticism and celibacy:** Essentially, the Buddha was a monk who advocated for a life of celibacy and renunciation of worldly pleasures as a means of attaining enlightenment. However, in some modern schools of Buddhism, such as Tibetan Buddhism, it is not uncommon for monks to have sexual relationships and engage in other activities that were not taught by the Buddha and were considered a detriment to awakening.
- **The concept of an eternal self:** The Buddha taught that all phenomena, including the self, are impermanent and devoid of inherent existence. However, some modern schools of Buddhism, such as Pure Land Buddhism, teach the existence of an eternal self that can be reborn into a paradise realm after death.
- **Women's role in Buddhism:** The Buddha himself welcomed women into the monastic community and taught that women were capable of attaining enlightenment. However, in some traditional Buddhist societies, women are still considered inferior to men and are excluded from certain aspects of Dhamma practice and leadership roles.
- **The concept of the bodhisattva:** While the Buddha taught the importance of compassion and altruism, the concept of the bodhisattva as a being who postpones their own enlightenment to help others was not a central part of his teachings. The bodhisattva ideal emerged later in Mahayana Buddhism, and some interpretations may place less emphasis on the development of personal insight and wisdom. This is inconsistent with the Buddha's teachings, which emphasized the cultivation of wisdom and insight as the means to liberation, as seen in the *Samyutta Nikaya* (SN 56.11).
- **The use of Tantric practices:** While some forms of Vajrayana Buddhism involve the use of Tantric practices, including sexual practices, as a means of attaining enlightenment, such practices are not found in the Pali suttas. The Buddha taught celibacy as a means of avoiding distraction and attachment, as seen in the *Brahmajala Sutta* (DN 1) and the *Vinaya Pitaka*. There is debate among scholars and practitioners about the origins and validity of Tantric practices because they are not consistent with the Buddha's original teachings on celibacy and non-attachment.
- **The role of compassion and merit-making:** While the Buddha taught the importance of compassion and altruism, some modern Mahayana and Vajrayana practices place more emphasis on the accumulation of merit through good deeds and offerings to deities or bodhisattvas. This is inconsistent with the Buddha's teachings, which emphasized the development of personal insight and wisdom as the means to liberation, and the role of ethical conduct in cultivating wholesome states of mind, as seen in the *Dhammapada* (183-185) and the *Samyutta Nikaya* (SN 45.8).

These are just a few examples, and there are many other ways in which the modern practice of Buddhism differs from the Buddha's original teachings. Ultimately, the core teachings of the Buddha, such as the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path, remain central to the practice of Buddhism and continue to offer a path to liberation from suffering and the attainment of enlightenment.

"Expressions" of the Buddha's Teachings

When we talk about the concept of "expression" in the context of interpretation, it refers to the way in which we understand and convey the meaning of a particular teaching, message or word. In other words, our interpretation is the lens through which we view and communicate what we know or think we know. From a philosophical and pragmatic standpoint, the concept of "expression" refers to *the process* by which something is conveyed or communicated to others. In the context of the Dhamma, an expression of the Buddha's teachings might refer to any form of communication or transmission that conveys the essence of the Buddha's insights and teachings to others.

However, the use of "expression" can also alter the original meaning of something in a number of ways. By changing the way something is expressed or communicated, the message can be distorted, misrepresented, or misunderstood. For example, if an idea or concept is expressed using ambiguous or vague language, the meaning may be open to interpretation and therefore subject to misinterpretation or manipulation. Conversely, if an idea or concept is expressed using clear and concise language, the meaning is less likely to be distorted. The use of figurative language, such as metaphors or similes, often times alters the original meaning of something by introducing new associations or comparisons. This can be a powerful tool for conveying complex or abstract ideas, but it can also be misleading if the comparisons or associations are inappropriate, inaccurate or anachronistic.

Unfortunately, when someone is determined to advance their point of view, the concept of "expression" often times gives license to purposefully alter the original meaning and context of something through the mechanism of interpretation, which results in the dilution of the original message into mere opinion. This can occur when an expression becomes disconnected from its original context and is interpreted or reinterpreted in a way that is inconsistent with the original message or intention. This brings to mind the earlier teaching of the Buddha in the *Neyyatha Sutta* mentioned on page 74. For example, particular teachings of the Buddha were formulated in a specific historical and cultural context, and may have been intended to convey a particular meaning or insight to a particular audience. It is a simple thing to understand the reasons why the Buddha communicated in the repetitive manner that he did and chose the words that he did.

However, over time, a teaching may be reinterpreted or misinterpreted in ways that obscure its original meaning or intention, or that emphasize certain aspects of the teaching while downplaying or ignoring others. When this happens, the original teaching becomes diluted, losing its original essence because it is no longer grounded in a clear and coherent context or framework. Buddha's teachings have become subject to personal interpretation or reinterpretation, losing the ability to convey a clear and meaningful message to others. Also, personal interpretation leads to concepts and ideas that serve to support spurious claims about what the Buddha taught. This can be especially problematic in the case of the Buddha's original teachings, which are often intended to provide guidance and insight into fundamental questions about human existence.

To avoid this kind of denigration of original meaning, it is important to approach "expressions" of teachings with mindfulness and critical reflection, and to be aware of the historical and cultural context in which the teachings were originally formulated. It is also important to engage in respectful dialogue and inquiry with others, and to be open to the insights and perspectives of others, even if they differ from our own. In this way, one can be relatively certain that the true teachings of the Buddha will reveal their strength and clarity.

Interpretation of the Buddha's teachings can vary based on an individual's cultural, historical, and personal affiliations. For instance, a Westerner may understand the concept of non-self (*anatta*) differently from an Easterner, and someone with a scientific background may interpret the idea of kamma differently from someone with a religious background. Therefore, when expressing our understanding of the Buddha's teachings, it's crucial to be aware of our biases and limitations and recognize that our interpretation may not be the most accurate one. It's also important to remain receptive to others' interpretations and engage in respectful dialogue to deepen our comprehension of the teachings. However, to prevent our interpretation from becoming corrupted by personal biases, it's essential to have a comprehensive understanding of the Buddha's original teaching.

In the case of misinterpretation, an expression may not accurately convey the meaning of the original teaching, and may lead to misunderstandings or confusion. This is the case, as mentioned earlier, with the "expression" of the word "spiritual" that conveys an entirely unrelated meaning onto the Buddha's teachings. It is important to engage in critical reflection and inquiry to discern the validity and usefulness of different interpretations and *expressions* of the Buddha's teachings. A correct expression of the Buddha's original teaching means that the teaching is not altered by our opinions, beliefs, biases, religious affiliations or which form of Buddhism we engage in.

The value of different expressions of the Buddha's teachings depends on their ability to help individuals understand and apply the core insights of the teachings to their daily lives. For some, this may involve intellectual inquiry and reflection, while for others, it may involve meditative practice or other expressive activities. Ultimately, the value of these expressions lies in their ability to help individuals cultivate wisdom, compassion, and insight, and overcome suffering and delusion.

Equating the Buddha's teachings with the beliefs, concepts, and practices of faith-based religions is misguided. This approach imposes the viewpoints of existing religious practices onto the Buddha's teachings, which is often anachronistic and inaccurate. Some individuals use the concept of "expression" to justify these claims, but it is important to examine whether these expressions align with the original teachings of the Buddha, which as I have shown, can be susceptible to alteration through misuse through the concept of expression, but by referring to the Pali texts, incorrect expressions can be recognized and corrected.

Ultimate Truth, Conventional Truth & Direct Experience

In the Pali texts, the Buddha's teachings are often described as *paramattha sacca* or *ultimate truth*, which refers to a truth that is universal, transcendent of the conventional and that **pertains to the fundamental nature of reality itself**. This is contrasted with *sammuti sacca* or conventional truth, which refers to truths that are contingent upon cultural, linguistic, and other conventional factors. There is a distinction between ultimate and conventional truth, which is discussed in several suttas, including the *Sammaditthi Sutta* (MN 9) and the *Cula-Saccaka Sutta* (MN 35). In the *Sammaditthi Sutta*, the Buddha explains that there are two kinds of knowledge: the knowledge of conventional truth (*sammuti-nana*) and the knowledge of ultimate truth (*paramattha-nana*). He goes on to explain that the knowledge of ultimate truth is necessary for attaining liberation from suffering, while the knowledge of conventional truth is only useful in that it helps us to navigate the phenomenal world of everyday experience. Similarly, in the *Cula-Saccaka Sutta*, the Buddha explains that the truths of conventional reality are subject to change and are therefore not ultimately true, while the truths of ultimate reality are unchanging and enduring. He uses the analogy of a potter's wheel to illustrate the impermanence of conventional truths, while the ultimate truth is likened to the "unshakable deliverance of the mind" (*Cula-Saccaka Sutta* MN 35.22) (See Appendix 10).

"Knowing and seeing the truth, how can I not practice in accordance with the true Dhamma? Some people say of me: 'The ascetic Gotama is addicted to the doctrine of the samaṇas'. But if I know and see the truth, why would I be addicted to a falsehood? Yet still, some might think: 'The ascetic Gotama is addicted to falsehood.' But the truth has been spoken by the Enlightened One (Bhagavā / Bhagavant). I do not claim to be one who is not addicted to falsehood, but I know and see the one truth.

Friend Sāti, whatever you experience as pleasant, painful, or neither painful nor pleasant, arises in dependence upon a corresponding condition. But someone who lives indulging in sensual pleasures or meditating with an attachment to them, does not properly understand the connection with falsehood, and he is addicted to falsehood. This is the way that one who lives indulging in sensual pleasures or meditating with an attachment to them experiences pleasure, pain, or neither painful nor pleasant, but is not well-versed in the connection with falsehood, and is addicted to falsehood."

The Buddha's teachings are regarded as the ultimate truth because they provide a comprehensive and timeless analysis of the nature of reality and the causes of suffering. These teachings are not limited by any cultural, historical, or ritual context, but are relevant to all beings, regardless of their background or circumstances. The teachings offer a path to liberation from suffering that is based on a profound understanding of the nature of reality and the causes of suffering, which can be followed by anyone willing to put in the necessary effort and practice.

The distinction between ultimate and conventional truth is a crucial aspect of the Buddha's teachings, underscoring the depth and universality of his insights into the nature of reality and the human condition. The Pali texts serve as a valuable resource for teachings and insights that can deepen our understanding of these truths and help us apply them in our lives in a meaningful and transformative way.

Additionally, the Pali canon contains many references to the importance of direct experience in understanding the Buddha's teachings. In the *Anguttara Nikaya*, the Buddha says, "When you know for yourselves that, 'These qualities are unskillful; these qualities are blameworthy; these qualities are criticized by the wise; these qualities, when adopted and carried out, lead to harm and to suffering' — then you should abandon them." (AN 3.65) This passage emphasizes the importance of personal experience and direct knowledge in understanding the nature of reality and the path to liberation, but this also includes the discernment of what was actually taught by the Buddha.

In the same vein, the *Samyutta Nikaya* states that "The Dhamma is taught for the sake of direct knowledge, for the sake of realizing the truth, and with the confidence (*saddha*) of liberation from all suffering." (*Samyutta Nikaya* 56.11) This further underscores the importance of direct experience as the means to comprehend the ultimate truths that the Buddha taught. Therefore, it is essential to cultivate direct personal experience of the Dhamma in order to fully comprehend the ultimate truths and solutions that the Buddha's teachings offer for the problems of existence.

Take note of the fact that the Buddha did not say that the Dhamma is taught for the sake of religious worship or for the sake of "Buddhism," but that the Dhamma is taught for the sake of conveying "direct knowledge" to realize and experience truth that will lead one toward an eventual awakening. So then, what is the intended purpose of the Dhamma? From the Buddha's statement, does it seem like he is inferring in any way "religion?"

According to the Buddha's teachings, Dhamma encompasses two forms of truth, conventional truth (*sammuti sacca*)⁸⁷ and ultimate truth (*paramattha sacca*).

⁸⁸ *Sammuti sacca*⁸⁹ refers to truth that is widely accepted by conventional usage largely by consensus. For instance, the general consensus that an apple comes from an apple tree and not an orange tree, or that fire can be both beneficial and harmful.

Conventional truth refers to our everyday experiences and our understanding of how the world appears and functions. Our ability to distinguish between conventional truth and falsehood is innate to our cognitive processes. For example, knowing the difference between a snake and a rope is crucial to avoiding harm. Although the accuracy of conventional truth is important, it cannot be considered ultimate truth since it is based on concepts that can be misleading. Our perceptions and interpretations are often flawed due to our attachment to personal beliefs and meanings. Individual characteristics shape our experiences, and it is our attachment to the self that leads to human suffering. Conventional truth is defined and analyzed conceptually and linguistically through the abstract construction of human sensing and perception.

How to Determine the Ultimate Validity of the Dhamma

In the Theravada school, "*Paramattha sacca*" is a fundamental concept that refers to the ultimate or highest truth. It is emphasized throughout many texts in the Pali Canon and is the ultimate reality that underlies all phenomena. This truth is not dependent on any conditions and is the key to achieving liberation, enlightenment, and freedom from suffering. In contrast, "*Sammuti sacca*" refers to the conventional truth, which is the world of everyday names, concepts, and designations used to navigate daily life. According to the Buddha, the ultimate truth of *Paramattha sacca* is a truth that is beyond everyday concepts, names, labels and forms.

87 **Paramattha sacca:** Pāli: परमत्थं Def: "The highest ideal; truth in the ultimate sense; highest, most excellent, superior, best; paraphrased by *agga seṭṭha viśiṭṭha* at Nd2 502 A= Nd1 84, 102 (the latter reading *viśeṭṭha* for *viśiṭṭha*); by *uttama* at DhA iii.237; VvA 78. — D i.124 (*ettaka*); M ii.120 ("nipacca"); S i.166; ii.277; v.230; A v.64 ("diṭṭha-dhamma-nibbāna"); Sn 138 (*yaṣaṇ paramaṇ patto*), 296 ("ā mittā"), 788 (*suddhaṇ "ṇ arogaṇ*), 1071 (*saññāvimokhe "e vimutto*); Dh 184 (*nibbānaṇ "ṇ vadanti Buddhā*). 203, 243; Vv 161 ("alankata= paramaṇ ativiya viśeṣato VvA 78) Pv ii.910 ("iddhi"); Pug 15, 16, 66; SnA 453 ("issara"); PvA 12 ("nipacca"). 15 ("duggandha"), 46. — At the end of a cpd. (-") "at the outmost, at the highest, at most; as a minimum, at least" Vin iv.263 (*dvanguḷa-pabba*"); esp. freq. in phrase *sattakkhattu* "one who will be reborn seven times at the outmost, i. e. at the end of the 7 rebirthinterval S ii.185 (*sa*"); v.205; A i.233; iv.381; v.120; It 18; Kvu 469. See *pārami* & *pāramitā*. -attha [cp. class. Sk. *paramārtha*] the highest good, ideal; truth in the ultimate sense, philosophical truth" Src: https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/Pāli_query.py?qs=parama&searchhws=yes&matchtype=exact

88 **Sammuti sacca:** Pāli: सम्मति Def: "Common consent, general opinion, convention, that which is generally accepted; as " - conventional, e. g. "sacca conventional truth (as opposed to *paramattha* " the absolute truth)." Src: https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/Pāli_query.py?qs=sammuti&searchhws=yes&matchtype=exact

89 **Sacca:** Pāli: सच्च Def: "Truth, real, true." Src: https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/Pāli_query.py?qs=sacca&searchhws=yes&matchtype=exact

The realization of *Paramattha sacca* is a core aim of practice and is attained through insight meditation or *vipassana*. This practice involves the cultivation of mindfulness, awareness, and clear comprehension, and through it, one penetrates the illusion of conventional truth and directly experiences ultimate truth.

In the Pali Canon, the Buddha used various terms to describe the nature of *Paramattha sacca*, including "*dhamma*," "*nibbana*," and "*yathabhuta*," among others. These terms are used to point to the ultimate nature of reality, which transcends concepts and designations.

There is some debate among Pali scholars about the meaning of the word "*yathabhuta*." From my understanding, based on its usage in the Pali texts, *yathabhuta* refers to the ultimate or highest truth of the nature of reality. The term is a combination of "*yatha*," which means "as" or "in accordance with," and "*bhuta*," which means "what has come to be" or "what exists." Therefore, *yathabhuta* can be translated as "in accordance with what exists" or "in accordance with what has come to be." So, in the context of the Buddha's teachings, *yathabhuta* is used to describe the ultimate nature of reality, which transcends concepts, names, and forms. This reality stands on its own, without parts, and is singular. It represents the true reality of things, as opposed to the conventional reality that we experience in our everyday lives. *Yathabhuta* is the reality that can only be directly experienced through insight meditation or *Vipassana*, and it is the highest or ultimate truth that the Buddha taught.

According to the Buddha's teaching, the conventional reality that we experience in our everyday lives is a result of our mental formations and perceptions. These mental formations and perceptions create a veil of illusion that obscures the true nature of reality. Through the cultivation of mindfulness and clear comprehension, one can penetrate through the illusion of conventional reality and directly experience the ultimate truth of *yathabhuta*.

In the Pali Canon, the Buddha used the term *yathabhuta* to describe the ultimate nature of reality in many different contexts. For example, in the *Digha Nikaya*, the Buddha says,

"Whatever is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, attained, sought after, and pondered by the mind -- that is called 'form' in the discipline of the noble ones. And with what is it [form] associated? With clinging. That is called a 'noble truth of stress.' Yathabhuta--this is how it is." (DN 14)

This passage illustrates how the concept of *yathabhuta* is used to describe the ultimate nature of reality, which is beyond clinging and stress. I would explain an example of a real-time *yathabhuta* in action in terms of the ultimate truth of impermanence or *anicca*. *Anicca* (impermanence) is one of the three characteristics or marks of existence, which refer to the fundamental nature of all phenomena in the Buddha's teachings.

Anicca, or impermanence, refers to the fact that *all things* are in a constant state of flux, and are subject to change and decay. According to the Dhamma teachings, this impermanence is a fundamental aspect of existence and is an ultimate truth that underlies all phenomena. In the case of *anicca*, *yathabhuta* refers to the reality of impermanence as it truly is, as opposed to the conventional reality that we experience in our everyday lives.

Through the cultivation of mindfulness and clear comprehension, one can penetrate through the illusion of conventional reality and directly understand and comprehend the ultimate truth of impermanence. This direct experience allows one to understand the true nature of reality and to cultivate wisdom and insight. For example, in the *Satipatthana Sutta*, the Buddha teaches mindfulness meditation as a means to directly experience the ultimate truth of impermanence. The meditator is instructed to observe the impermanence of their own physical sensations, mental states, and perceptions in order to develop an understanding of the ultimate truth of impermanence. Observing the impermanence of one's own bodily sensations, various mental states, and the perceptions we form represents the ultimate truth that nothing we experience is permanent. Therefore, an example of *yathabhuta* in terms of the ultimate truth of impermanence is the direct experience of the constant change and flux of all phenomena, which is a fundamental aspect of existence.

This understanding of impermanence is an ultimate truth, a *paramattha sacca*, the ultimate, unchangeable truth of the nature of the impermanence of all of our sensations, and mental formations, which also underlies the phenomena of all that exists. Both *Paramattha sacca* and *yathabhuta* emphasize the means to liberation, enlightenment, and release from suffering. *Paramattha sacca* refers to the concept of "truth" in its absolute and ultimate form. Everything we know and we see in the phenomenal material world, is identified by the Buddha as the *dhammā*. This ultimate truth is characterized by its unchanging, untainted, and incorruptible nature, and is not dependent on any external factors.

It is vital to understand that the concept of ultimate truth does not refer to a transcendent (supreme) reality, but rather a mental clarity that is elevated beyond deceit, misunderstanding, and misinterpretation. Ultimate truths embody ultimate realities, which can be understood both ontologically and epistemologically as the supreme objects of accurate knowledge. To qualify as an ultimate truth, something must exist as an irreducible reality, akin to gravity. Conversely, concepts are unable to possess the qualities of ultimate truth since they are not tangible entities and are ephemeral. The Buddha's teachings aimed to disclose the truth about the *dhammā*, which is the truth regarding the essence of existence, in order to offer an enduring solution to human suffering. The instructions he imparted were not founded on messages from a supernatural being, but rather derived from his own direct experiences and comprehension of both the Dhamma and the *dhammā*.

Concerning the phrase “phenomenal world;” this refers to the world of sensory experience that we experience through our senses, which are all characterized by impermanence, the potential for suffering, and non-self. The phenomenal world of a living being (*satta*),⁹⁰ or *loka*⁹¹ in Pali, is the world that an individual living being experiences through the senses, and it includes all the phenomena that we can perceive, such as sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and physical sensations.

The Dhamma teachings describe the phenomenal world through the three marks of existence: *anicca* (impermanence), *dukkha* (suffering), and *anatta* (non-self). All phenomena are in constant flux, unsatisfactory, and lack permanent essence. The Buddha contrasts this phenomenal world with the ultimate reality, which is experienced through insight meditation and is beyond concepts and forms. This ultimate reality is the highest truth taught by the Buddha.

The Buddha used the phrase “the phenomenal world” (*lokadhammā*) to describe the world that we experience through our senses, and to emphasize the unsatisfactory and impermanent nature of our individual world as a living being. The Buddha’s teachings encourage us to cultivate detachment and dispassion from the phenomenal world by learning to be aware of our proclivity to become attached to it. In this way we learn to cultivate wisdom and insight into the true nature of reality. For example, in the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha says: ”

All conditioned things are impermanent. When one sees this with wisdom, one turns away from suffering. This is the path to purification (Dhammapada 277)."

This passage emphasizes the importance of understanding the impermanent and unsatisfactory nature of our individual phenomenal world in order to turn away from suffering and cultivate wisdom.

The validity of these things can only be confirmed through personal experience. The Buddha's teachings on basic concepts, including death, causation, awareness, and stress, are ultimate truths that cannot be simplified or broken down. Death represents the end of life, while gravity is an unchanging force. Consciousness reflects a state of existence, while stress embodies a mental and emotional strain.

Personal experiences allow humans to understand certain truths, including the First Law of Thermodynamics and the Dhamma's Absolute Truth. The concept of *paramattha sacca* explores all aspects of the Buddha Dhamma, including the Four Noble Truths, which constitute the entire Dhamma. These truths are real, supportive, and unchanging. The first Noble Truth states that all beings experience pain and suffering throughout their lives, including birth, old age, sickness, and death.

⁹⁰ Loka: Kaccānagotta Sutta (SN 12.15): Dvayanissito khvāyaṃ, kaccāna, loka yebhuyyena—atthitañceva natthitañca. A living being will exist as long as the (akusala-mula) Paṭicca Samuppāda process is in effect and thus exists in a “loka.”

⁹¹ Loka: See *Appendix Loka*

Additionally, sorrow, grief, anxiety, unpleasant experiences, and separation from the pleasant are sources of pain. The five assemblies of mind and matter that are subject to attachment also cause suffering. For instance, the Four Noble Truths, which were the Buddha's first teaching and represent the entire Dhamma, which are considered Noble Truths because they are real, supporting, and unchanging (*Samyutta Nikaya: Tatha Sutta*).⁹² The first of these Noble Truths states:

"All beings experience pain and misery (dukkha) during their lifetime: Birth is pain, old age is pain, sickness is pain, death is pain; sorrow, grief, and anxiety is pain. Contact with the unpleasant is pain. Separating from the pleasant is pain. Not getting what one wants is pain. In short, the five assemblies of mind and matter that are subject to attachment are pain."

This teaching explains and clarifies that "*all beings experience pain and misery (dukkha) during their lifetime.*" This teaching does not represent a conventional truth, but an absolute truth. All of the Buddha's teachings conform to the concept of *paramattha sacca*⁹³ or absolute truth, as was discussed earlier. Ultimate truths are not the result of mental constructions (*parikappa*)⁹⁴ and exist as realities in their own right.

The Buddha's teaching about *dukkha* reminds us that all beings experience pain and misery throughout their lifetime. *Dukkha* is a pervasive and universal experience that arises from various forms of pain and suffering, including birth, old age, sickness, and death, as well as mental and emotional pain arising from our attachments and desires. It describes the unsatisfactory nature of all phenomena and is a fundamental aspect of existence. But, the teaching invites us to understand and transcend *dukkha* by cultivating insight into the true nature of reality and developing wisdom about our experiences. This involves cultivating wholesome qualities such as compassion and generosity toward ourselves and others.

In the context of the Dhamma teachings about *dukkha*, Buddha refers to the "*five assemblies of mind and matter, which are subject to attachment.*" This refers to the five aggregates, or *khandhas*, that make up our individual *loka* (world), and the experiences of senses as an individual living being. These aggregates are form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness, which are subject to the three characteristics of existence: *anicca* (impermanence), *dukkha* (unsatisfactoriness), and *anatta* (non-self). This is *paramattha sacca* or ultimate truths.

92 Tatha Sutta: Src: https://www.dhammadatalks.org/suttas/SN/SN56_20.html

93 Paramattha sacca: [Ultimate Truth] Good Explanation: Src:

<https://puredhamma.net/forums/topic/paramattha-sammuti-sacca-no-good-explanation/>

94 Parikappa: Pāli: परिकप्प Def: "Intention; assumption; supposition; stratagem (Th 1, 940); surmise."

Src: <https://suttacentral.net/search?query=parikappa> | https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/Pāli_query.py?qs=parikappa&searchhws=yes&matchtype=exact

In summary, I would explain the Buddha's teaching as a reminder of the fundamental truth of dukkha, or the unsatisfactory nature of existence. Dukkha IS the truth about the nature of the reality of existence. The Buddha's teaching identifies various forms of dukkha, including physical pain and suffering, as well as mental and emotional pain arising from our attachments and desires.

This does not mean becoming an emotionless machine, but rather accepting experiences for what they are without labels, judgements or values. It also acknowledges the impermanence of pain and the need to accept it without resistance. This also doesn't mean we don't say ouch when we hit our thumb with a hammer, we simply accept that the experience of pain is impermanent—pain just is and it too will end.

Ultimate realities, which possess the qualities of ultimate truth, exist due to their intrinsic nature (*sabhava*).^{95 | 96} They are referred to as true Dhammas (teachings of the Buddha that are ultimately true) because they are the final and irreducible components of existence, resulting from a correct analysis of experience. However, this is where the issue arises with many modern-day philosophers who lack a proper understanding of the nature of experience (*sabhava*). With regard to the Dhamma, without proper understanding of the nature of experience, the result can only be a product of mental constructs. Through the observation, knowledge, understanding, and direct experience of ultimate truth, it becomes clear that no further reduction is possible or necessary. The ultimate truth is the final result of the analysis, representing the ultimate validity of the entire experience. This is why the term *paramattha* (parama=ultimate; final) (attha=reality) is used to describe these ultimate truths.

When all of these teachings of the Buddha, particularly with regard to the nature of ultimate truth, are applied to the mental construct of the conventional meaning of religion, and whether or not such a mental construct can be used to “define” the Dhamma or the Buddha, as you can see, is complex and multifaceted. On one hand, the concept of *paramattha sacca* highlights the importance of understanding the ultimate truth of all phenomena, including the true nature of the self, in order to achieve any level of release from suffering. This suggests that the conventional meaning of religion, or any other conceptual framework that relies on fixed or permanent definitions, is limited in its ability to fully capture the dynamic and interdependent nature of reality. The concept of *sabhāva* suggests that there are natural or essential properties of things that can be known and understood through direct experience and investigation. Therefore, determining the conventional meaning of religion, or any other conceptual framework, will help one to understand the nature of the conventional meaning of religion.

95 Sabhava: Pāli: सभवा Def: “Nature; condition; disposition; reality; natural state of mind.” Src: https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/Pali_query.py?qs=sabh%C4%81va&searchhws=yes&matchtype=exact

96 Sabhava: See Appendix

When one is able to achieve this understanding, according to the concepts of *paramattha sacca* and *sabhāva*, so long as it is approached with an open and flexible mind, then one will clearly see that the mental conceptual construct of religion doesn't fit into the Buddha's teachings.

Ultimately, the question of whether or not the conventional meaning of religion can be used to define the Dhamma or the Buddha is one that must be approached with careful consideration of the conventional meaning of religion, and the ultimate truth of the teachings of the Buddha, as well as a deep understanding of the nature of *paramattha sacca* and *sabhāva*. To clearly distinguish between conventional truth and ultimate truth, direct experience is not only necessary, it is required.

To understand the ultimate realities of the Dhamma, one must be able to discern subtleties. It is within these subtleties that the true essence; the ultimate truth of the Buddha Dhamma and the depth of the Buddha's teachings can be realized. An ordinary person (*puthujjana*),⁹⁷ who only has a limited understanding of the Buddha's teachings through the lens of a manufactured, adulterated form of Buddhism, lacking knowledge and understanding, cannot perceive these subtleties. The reason they cannot see the ultimate realities is because their mind is clouded by concepts, beliefs and opinions, particularly the general concepts associated with a manufactured form of Buddhism, which in turn produces a manufactured Buddhist worldview, which presents the teachings in merely a conventional manner. This demonstrates the old adage that a little knowledge can be dangerous.

All Conditioned Things

Conditioning & Mental Constructs

Everything is interdependent. This is what the Buddha taught. Nothing exists independently from anything else. This is true also about concepts, ideas, beliefs, and opinions. These things are mental constructs that are dependent on many things, which are all subject to change and can only be considered conventional truths. Religion too, is a social and mental construct, and is one of the most enduring forms of conventional truth in human history. But, conventional truths are temporary and subject to change. Ultimate or absolute truths are permanent and unchanging. The fact that apples come from apple trees and not orange trees is a permanent and absolute truth that is not subject to change. That the Dhamma is not subject to change, it is an ultimate truth. In contrast to the Buddha Dhamma, the tenets, doctrines, practices, and dogma of faith-based religions have undergone significant changes over time, influenced by political and social climates, including the cultural influence during different eras. However, prior to the invention of Mahayana Buddhism, the original teachings of the Buddha have remained unchanged for over 2,600 years, regardless of any political, social, cultural, or historical context that may have happened since that time.

⁹⁷ Puthujjana: See Appendix

An arthropod,⁹⁸ of the class Insecta,⁹⁹ with three pairs of legs, a segmented body, and one or two pairs of wings, is widely recognized as an insect. Claiming that a cat is an insect because it has legs, no matter how fervent your claim, is intrinsically untrue. Likewise, despite similarities, a Volkswagen will never be a Maserati. Common attributes or characteristics of one thing do not make the things identical or even the same. For many people, this is simply common-sense. Attributing one quality or feature onto something else does not change its intended or true nature. This is why extracting fragments from the Buddha's teachings and equating them to religion is problematic. Examination and scrutiny of a Volkswagen and a Maserati reveals the stark differences between the two. While they are both cars, they are not the same car. Try selling a Volkswagen Jetta for \$350,000, which is the price of a Maserati GranTurismo S Mansory. Basing your reasoning on the fact that they are both cars, what is the likelihood that you would be successful?

To gain a true understanding of the Buddha's teachings, one must be willing to scrutinize the claims made by those who purport to be knowledgeable about them. When purchasing a car, one scrutinizes and familiarizes oneself with its features and characteristics, even looking under the hood to confirm the validity of a salesperson's claims. Similarly, one should not accept the claim that the Buddha's teachings constitute a religion without first examining the evidence.

To determine for oneself whether the Buddha's teachings constitute a religion, one may need to look under the hood by delving into the Pali language and understanding the concepts behind the words the Buddha used. Any concept that deviates from the foundational essence of the Dhamma is a conceptual adaptation and not an original teaching of the Buddha. Just as placing a Maserati insignia on a Volkswagen does not make it a Maserati, applying the concept of religion to the Dhamma of the Buddha does not make it a religion. Similarly, placing a Chi Rho Cross in a Sangha meeting place does not make it Catholic.

Human beings have a natural tendency to categorize and label things in the world around them. This characteristic has been crucial in allowing humans to create consensus and navigate the world we live in. Labels and categories allow humans to group similar things together and distinguish them from dissimilar things. This helps us to make sense of the world, communicate with others, and share knowledge and ideas. When we assign a label or category to something, we create a shared understanding of what that thing is, and how it relates to other things in its category. This is one focus of the science of Linguistics known as semantics.

98 Arthropod: Def: "Any of numerous invertebrate animals of the phylum Arthropoda, including the insects, crustaceans, arachnids, and myriapods, that are characterized by a chitinous exoskeleton, a segmented body, and jointed appendages. A jointed invertebrate animal with jointed legs."

99 Insecta (class): Def: "Insecta (L. insectus, cut into) are the most diverse and abundant of all groups of arthropods." Src: https://biocyclopedia.com/index/general_zoology/class_insecta.php

For example, consider the label "apple." When we use this label, we are referring to a specific type of fruit that has certain characteristics such as being round, having a stem and seeds, and being red or green in color. By labeling apples as a specific type of fruit, we create a shared understanding of what an apple is and what it is not. This shared understanding allows us to communicate with others about apples, share information about their nutritional value and cooking uses, and make decisions about buying and selling them.

Labels and categories also allow humans to generalize and make predictions. When we encounter something new that fits into a familiar category, we can make *assumptions* about its properties and behavior based on our previous experiences with similar things. For example, if we see a new type of fruit that looks similar to an apple, we might assume that it has similar properties and can be used in similar ways. Sometimes, as history has borne out, our assumptions are wrong because they are based on incorrect information. One such disastrous assumption was the Salem Witch Trials.

The Salem witch trials: In 1692, a group of young girls in Salem, Massachusetts, claimed to be possessed by the devil and accused several women in the community of being witches. The accused were put on trial and many were convicted and executed. This disaster ensued due to the assumption that the accused were like European witches, who were believed to have supernatural powers and were thought to be able to harm others. This assumption led to a mass hysteria that resulted in the deaths of innocent people.

Humans have been classifying and labeling things as early as the writings of the ancient Egyptian philosopher-god Djehuty (Tehuti) (ancient Greek Thoth), four millennia ago.¹⁰⁰ Ancient Egyptians believed that something didn't exist if it was not named, which was based on the understanding that the naming of a thing was a way of defining its existence and giving it meaning. This is supported by their use of hieroglyphic writing to name and categorize the world around them.

The process by which the ancient Egyptians determined the names of things was based on observation and experience. They would have identified objects, animals, and other phenomena in their environment and given them names based on their physical appearance, behavior, or other characteristics. For example, the hieroglyph for "cat" (miw) depicts a seated feline with its tail wrapped around its feet, reflecting the physical characteristics of a domesticated cat.

The naming of people and gods in ancient Egypt was more complex and symbolic, with names being chosen for their association with certain qualities or attributes. For example, the name "Ra" (meaning "sun") was given to the god of the sun, reflecting his role as a powerful and life-giving force.

100 Emerald Tablet of Djehuty: Src: <http://moreesemadu.com/ancient-texts-before-the-bible/>

The process of naming in ancient Egypt was also influenced by cultural and religious beliefs, as well as political and social hierarchies. The pharaohs, for example, were often given multiple names and titles that reflected their divine and political status.

Since the time of the ancient Egyptians, humans have developed many classifications to label every aspect of the phenomenal world, which of course, is useful for legal, military, consensus and taxonomic purposes. Categorization and labeling support human tendencies towards generalization, and can aid us in recognizing conventional truths, creating consensus and assisting in communication. However, like the ancient Egyptians, these are subject to bias, political, social, cultural and religious influences. And, over time, the meanings assigned to labels can devolve from actual to superficial.

It is for this reason that the US legal system recognizes different classifications of intent, known as the legal doctrine of *mens rea*.¹⁰¹ Classifying things together based on superficial similarities, especially for the convenience of social, traditional, or political consensus, may serve some purposes for generalization of minor details, but often times does not preserve original meanings. However, label-smoothing or overgeneralization of labels, particularly with a significant word such as "religion," is recklessly irresponsible, given the proven seriousness of the consequences.

Most Americans know how making erroneous assumptions can cause social problems within a society. Following 9/11, many Muslim Americans experienced discrimination and harassment, including being subjected to invasive security measures at airports and being denied employment opportunities or housing because of their religion. This discrimination has continued in the years since 9/11, with anti-Muslim rhetoric and policies becoming more widespread in some parts of the world.

The assumption that all Muslims are alike and support terrorism ignores the diversity within the Muslim community, which includes a wide range of beliefs, practices, and cultures. Muslim people come from many different countries and backgrounds, and they do not all share the same beliefs or political views.

The discrimination and prejudice against Muslim people following 9/11 demonstrate the dangers of making assumptions based on unconnected or unrelated similarities. This is precisely what those who claim that the Buddha's teachings constitute religion are doing. They are making generalized assumptions based on things they believe are similar and so promote their ideas based wholly on assumption, which is mostly devoid of fact.

101 Mens rea: Def: "Mens rea (/ˈmɛnz ˈreɪə/; Law Latin for "guilty mind") is the mental element of a person's intention to commit a crime; or knowledge that one's action or lack of action would cause a crime to be committed. It is a necessary element of many crimes." Src: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mens_rea

Classifying the Buddha's teachings as religion reduces and trivializes them, just as pairing the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi¹⁰² with the philosophy of the Marquis de Sade¹⁰³ is inappropriate. Lumping the teachings of the Buddha with the doctrines and cultural practices of faith-based religions not only severely misrepresents the intention of the Buddha, but also undermines the purpose and effectiveness of the Dhamma.

During the Middle Ages, the prevailing worldview was that the Earth was flat. Although being completely false, this view was the conventional truth of that time. As people explored larger expanses of land, such as deserts and plains, they concluded that since these areas were flat, the entire Earth must be flat.¹⁰⁴ However, a logical, empirical, and ontological examination shows that a large flat expanse of land does not necessarily mean that the entire Earth has these same characteristics. The foundation and construct of this analogy applies to the teachings of the Buddha. Observing one feature, one characteristic or one aspect of religious teachings or historical cultural traditions, does not provide a complete picture. Just as the incomplete picture of the Earth during the Middle Ages produced the conventional truth that the Earth was flat, which was based solely on the assumption of "sameness" that since land was flat, the Earth was also flat.

Another specific example highlighting superficial similarities: Many Mahayana traditions, particularly cultural Buddhist traditions of Tibetan, Zen, and Chinese Chan, Pure Land, and so on, do not accurately represent the Dhamma as a whole. Similarly, there are some Theravada practices that were adopted from ancient cultural traditions of countries such as Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Burma (Myanmar), or Thailand, do not accurately reflect the Dhamma as a whole.

The saying "*If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and sounds like a duck, it must be a duck*," assumes that one has a clear understanding and the authority to claim that they know what a duck is. However, how can one identify something as a duck if they have no knowledge of what a duck is? Because the platypus has webbed feet like a duck, does not make the platypus a duck. This is similar to claiming that the the Buddha's teachings or his methods constitute "religion." How can one claim that the Buddha's teachings are religion without understanding the Pali language and contextual factors that influenced the meaning of his concepts? It is akin to trying to differentiate between a duck and a platypus without any knowledge of either species. Without the appropriate knowledge, the claim simply cannot be considered valid.

¹⁰² Gandhi, Mahatma: Philosophy of: "Human nature is regarded as fundamentally virtuous. All individuals are believed to be capable of high moral development, and of reform." | <https://www.mkgandhi.org/articles/murphy.htm>

¹⁰³ Marquise de Sade: Philosophy of: "Philosophical discourse consisting of pornography, depicting sexual fantasies with an emphasis on violence, suffering, anal sex (which he calls sodomy), child rape, crime, and blasphemy against Christianity." | https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marquis_de_Sade

¹⁰⁴ Flat Earth: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flat_Earth

Comparisons between religion and the Buddha's teachings or methods are often made without a thorough understanding of the actual concepts and meanings behind the Pali words used by the Buddha. These comparisons may be influenced by personal or cultural biases, leading to distorted perceptions about the Buddha's teachings and even different forms of Buddhism created after his death. These distortions arise from erroneous assumptions, which can be uncovered by looking under the hood. However, no matter how fervently these comparisons are made, they are subjective rather than objective and shaped by the cultural traditions of various forms of Buddhism that have evolved over centuries since the Buddha's death.

To make valid assertions about the "religiosity" of the Buddha and the Dhamma, a comprehensive understanding of the contextual meaning of specific Pali words and phrases used by the Buddha is necessary. Devoid of this knowledge, it is impossible to accurately classify the Buddha's teachings and methods as a religion or not. Though some aspects of the Dhamma may share similarities with universal and commonly accepted ideas, they cannot be equated with the beliefs of faith-based religions. Any comparison that draws a parallel between the Buddha's teachings and religious beliefs without a valid basis of truth is comparable to claiming that an apple is a peach because they share the commonality of skin or fruit. The Pali texts do not suggest that the Buddha endorsed ideas, concepts, doctrines, or dogma of the Brahmins, Hindus, or Jains. As a result, there is no reason to believe that the Buddha would have endorsed modern faith-based religious ideas, concepts, or doctrines, nor accepted that his teachings constituted a religion.

If the teachings of the Buddha require classification, then they should be categorized like the platypus. When Europeans initially discovered the platypus in the late 18th century, the naturalists were confounded, and it became a topic of heated debate. The platypus possesses characteristics of both mammals (such as fur and the ability to nurse their young) and reptiles (such as laying eggs and having a cloaca). Initially, some naturalists thought the platypus was a hoax, while others classified it as a type of fish or amphibian. Later, a consensus was agreed upon, recognizing the platypus as a unique type of mammal. Similarly, the teachings of the Buddha, while exhibiting some characteristics of faith-based religion, cannot be categorized as such. Like the platypus, the Dhamma is in a class of its own and is unique.

The Buddha taught that all things are conditioned by something, and many things are conditioned by assumption when it is influenced or affected by a belief or idea that is not necessarily based on facts or evidence. An assumption is a supposition or hypothesis that is taken for granted without proof, and it can shape how we interpret, understand, and act upon information and experiences.

Assumptions can be conditioned by a range of factors, such as personal experience, cultural norms, social conditioning, and cognitive biases. When we make assumptions, we create mental models that shape how we perceive the world around us. These mental models can condition our thoughts, feelings, and actions, and may lead us to reinforce our assumptions and overlook contradictory evidence.

Kamma

How the Buddha's Teaching Stacks up in Relation to Modern Religion?

Kamma is a subject that has been widely discussed, yet there is still much confusion surrounding it. The concept, however, is much simpler than people realize. Essentially, a person's behavior throughout their life can be either good or bad, and this is determined by their conscious intent. Even if a person believes they are acting with good intentions or are simply unaware of the consequences of their actions, the outcome can still be harmful to themselves or others. This intentional behavior creates a person's karmic profile, which can be mostly good, mostly bad, or somewhere in between. When a person dies, their karmic energy does not die with them but is preserved and transferred to a new human life. The distribution of this energy is not entirely random but follows the same principles as other natural laws, such as genetics. There is no entity in charge of assigning karmic energies, but rather the energy of a new human life is matched to the energy of the parents. While the process of how karmic energy is transferred is complex, understanding its basic principles can shed light on the role it plays in human life.

The concept of kamma predates the Buddha, having been introduced to the Indian continent by the Indo-Aryans¹⁰⁵ who migrated from the Kopet-Dag¹⁰⁶ civilization (6,000 BCE), sometimes referred to as the Oxus Civilization (2250–1700 BCE) to India around 3,500 years before the formation of the pre-Brahminic Harrapan Civilization (Vedic Civilization¹⁰⁷)(3300-1300 BCE), known today as the Bactria–Margiana Archaeological Complex (*abbreviated as* BMAC).¹⁰⁸ These civilizations have roots in the much older Mehrgarh¹⁰⁹ civilization (7,000-2,500 BCE) of Balochistan, Pakistan,¹¹⁰ all of which are a part of what is now known as Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan.¹¹¹ The first recorded reference to karma can be found in the Rig Veda (2000 BCE),¹¹² which was written roughly 1,500 years prior to the Buddha. The concept of kamma was absorbed into the religious beliefs of these civilizations from the teachings of a previous Buddha, known as Kassapa.¹¹³

105 Lost Civilization of Asia: <https://www.discovermagazine.com/the-sciences/central-asias-lost-civilization>

106 Kopet-Dag Civilization: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kopet_Dag#Archaeology

107 Vedic Civilization:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_Vedic_religion#Origins_and_development

108 Bactria–Margiana Archaeological Complex:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bactria%E2%80%93Margiana_Archaeological_Complex#

109 Mehrgarh Civilization: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indus_Valley_Civilisation#Pre-Harappan_era:_Mehrgarh

110 Balochistan, Pakistan: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balochistan,_Pakistan#Early_history

111 Harappan Civilization: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harappa> |

112 Rigveda: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rigveda#Dating_and_historical_context

113 Kassapa Buddha: The twenty-seventh of the twenty-nine named Buddhas, the sixth of the Seven Buddhas of Antiquity, and the third of the five Buddhas of the present kalpa [kalpa: A large timeframe considered to be the length of an aeon, a period of a thousand million years.

However, by the time of the Buddha, the true meaning of kamma (karma) had been lost or influenced by many cultural traditions. It was Siddhartha Gotama, the Buddha of our present time, who clarified its meaning and correctly associated kamma to human life. The Buddha's teachings were not meant to be a replacement for the existing religious beliefs of his time, but rather a refinement and clarification of certain concepts, such as kamma, and its connection to the cycle of suffering, aging, death and rebirth. Despite being labeled as a religion by some in modern times, it's unlikely that the Buddha would have accepted modern religious beliefs given his rejection of theistic faith-based teachings and the belief that they were harmful to the individual. According to Theravadin Bhikkhu Dharmananda Mahaprabu, President of the Buddhist Council of America:

*"Buddhism is not a religion. It's not a faith or belief system. It is completely a science of the mind. It is full of psychology; how to control the mind. It is not a religion of faith. Buddhism is about experience and practice. The Buddha gave his own experience; what he practiced. He talked to the people and gave 84,000 teachings. He said the mind is the chief; the mind is the architect. The mind creates everything."*¹¹⁴

In the *Majjhima Nikaya*, Buddha clearly rejected belief in a Supreme Deity. History has proven the Buddha to be correct in this regard.¹¹⁵

"So, then, owing to the creation of a Supreme Deity, men will become murderers, thieves, un-chaste, liars, slanderers, abusive, babblers, covetous, malicious and perverse in view. Thus, for those who fall back on the creation of a God as the essential reason, there is neither desire nor effort nor necessity to do this deed or abstain from that deed."

In the *Majjhima Nikaya*, one of the main collections of the Pali texts, the Buddha discusses the concept of theism and a supreme deity. The *Brahmajala Sutta* (MN 1) is one discourse where the Buddha provides a comprehensive critique of various forms of wrong views, including theism, eternalism, and annihilationism. The discourse emphasizes the importance of accurate understanding of reality for spiritual growth and liberation.

The Buddha rejects the idea of a supreme deity who is responsible for creating, governing, and determining the fate of the world. He argues that such a belief is based on incorrect assumptions about the nature of the self and the world and, therefore, is an obstacle to spiritual advancement. The Buddha outlines 62 wrong views that were prevalent during his time, such as "the self and the world are eternal," "the self and the world are not eternal," and "the self and the world are both eternal and not eternal." He critiques each view, demonstrating how they are based on flawed assumptions about the true nature of reality and the self.

¹¹⁴ Buddhism is not a Religion: Dhamananda Mahaprabu: Src: <https://youtu.be/KRcEyQy44cI?t=558>

¹¹⁵ Buddha's teaching about belief in a Supreme God: *Majjhima Nikāya* ii, Sutta No. 101

In the section on theism, the Buddha explains that the belief in a supreme deity is grounded in inaccurate assumptions about causality and the nature of the self. He argues that such a belief perpetuates the idea of an eternal self or soul, which he refutes as an illusion. The Buddha's critique of theism emphasizes the importance of relying on personal experience and inquiry rather than relying on external authorities or dogmatic beliefs. The aim of the Buddha's teaching is to encourage individuals to develop their understanding and awareness of the nature of reality through direct observation and introspection. The Buddha states:

"There are some ascetics and brahmins who declare as their doctrine that all things began with God, or were created by God. But they are unable to establish this doctrine on any reasonable grounds whatsoever. This view is simply a matter of faith, and it is not supported by any rational argument. Furthermore, if we accept this view, we would have to say that God is responsible for everything, including evil and suffering. But this is not reasonable, for it would mean that God is not truly all-good, all-powerful, and all-knowing."

He goes on to explain that the idea of a supreme deity is a hindrance to the advancement of mental awakening, because it leads people to believe in fixed and eternal things, such as a self or soul, and become attached to rituals and ceremonies as a means of pleasing the deity. He argues that true liberation from suffering can only be attained through the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path, which involves developing wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental cultivation.

Several conceptual ideas of kamma existed in ancient Indian culture before the time of the Buddha. These concepts referred to the idea that a person's intentional actions, both good and bad, would have consequences affecting their future lives and rebirths. The Buddha's teachings on kamma built on pre-existing concepts, but expanded and refined it in several important ways. One of the key ways that the Buddha's teachings on karma differed from pre-existing ideas was in the emphasis on the role of intention (*cetanā*) in determining the moral quality of an action. In the Pali canon, the Buddha states in the *Anguttara Nikaya* (AN 6.63) that:

"Intention, I tell you, is kamma. Intending, one does kamma by way of body, speech, and mind."

This means that the moral quality of an action is determined by the intention behind it, rather than just the action itself. He also emphasized the idea of the Four Noble Truths, which included the truth of suffering (*dukkha*) and the truth of the cessation of suffering (*dukkha nirodha*). He taught that through the cultivation of wisdom and ethical conduct, individuals could break the cycle of rebirth and attain liberation from their suffering.

The Buddha recognized that understanding the intricacies of kamma can be challenging, as stated in the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*. He emphasized the importance of developing wisdom and insight to comprehend fully how it is that kamma operates and to understand the roots of one's own suffering. Although the Buddha's teachings on kamma drew from pre-existing knowledge, he redefined and expanded the concept in critical ways. The Buddha's teachings on kamma centered around the role of intention and the necessity of cultivating ethical conduct and wisdom. These teachings provided a framework for comprehending the origin of suffering and the path to liberation.

There is no mystery, supernatural or otherwise, that is connected with the Buddha's knowledge about kamma. He did not receive his information from some divine entity. Unless someone has achieved the mental advancement necessary to become a fully enlightened being, we cannot know how the Buddha came to understand the things he did. However, if the rest of his teachings are to be taken as an example of how he arrived at the knowledge he did, we can see that his knowledge was achieved by logical thinking with a mind that was completely free from the effects of, clinging, ignorance, greed, hatred and delusion. If we doubt that logical thinking had anything to do with it, all we need to do is to refresh our memories with the incredible scientific and philosophical studies that have been achieved throughout history with nothing more than logic. Probably the most famous is Einstein's Theory of Relativity, and Maxwell's equations,¹¹⁶ which he imagined with thought experiments, allowing him to visualize electromagnetic waves. This led to the discovery of the electromagnetic spectrum and the development of modern telecommunications. Then there are the profound philosophical discoveries that began as mere thought experiments, such as Plato's Theory of Forms,¹¹⁷ Descartes' Cogito Ergo Sum,¹¹⁸ Kant's Categorical Imperative,¹¹⁹ Nietzsche's Eternal Recurrence,¹²⁰ and Sartre's Existentialism.¹²¹ Like the Buddha, all of these had a profound impact on the humankind.

There are differences between the Buddha's teachings on kamma and the doctrines of divine judgment and reward found in faith-based religions. In the Buddha's teachings, the moral quality of an action is determined by the intention behind it, whereas faith-based religions attribute negative actions to an inherent weakness or defect in a person's soul inherited from ancient, some might say, the mythic humans Adam and Eve. The moral quality of an action is determined by whether it adheres to divine commandments or laws of a supernatural entity, rather than the subjective intentions behind it.

¹¹⁶ Maxwells' Equations: <https://www.iop.org/explore-physics/big-ideas-physics/maxwells-equations>

¹¹⁷ Plato's Theory of Forms: https://philosophynow.org/issues/90/Plato_A_Theory_of_Forms

¹¹⁸ Descartes' Cogito Ergo Sum https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cogito,_ergo_sum

¹¹⁹ Kant's Categorical Imperative https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Categorical_imperative

¹²⁰ Nietzsche Eternal Recurrence: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eternal_return#Nietzsche's_formulation

¹²¹ Sartre's Existentialism: <https://iep.utm.edu/Sartre-ex/>

Another difference is the concept of rebirth. The Buddha's teachings on kamma suggest that actions have consequences not only in the present life but also in future lives, which is intrinsically linked to the idea of rebirth. This concept is not part of the doctrines of divine judgment and reward found in faith-based religions.

Lastly, personal responsibility is emphasized in the Buddha's teachings on kamma, where individuals are held accountable for their actions and resulting consequences. This focus on personal responsibility is a crucial aspect of the path towards liberation. The distinctions between the Dhamma concept of kamma and the doctrines of divine judgment and reward show that they are distinctly separate moral frameworks, despite some similarities that may exist.

Using the correct meanings as taught by the Buddha to argue that the concepts of kamma and divine judgement of faith-based religion are ontologically identical, is indeed impossible. Given the fundamental differences in their underlying assumptions and mechanisms of operation it would be a challenging task. While both concepts pertain to the moral nature of human actions and their consequences, they have distinct ontological frameworks for understanding the nature of reality, human agency, and the relationship between actions and outcomes.

The Dhamma's concept of kamma is connected with the Buddha's teaching of dependent origination (*Paṭicca Samuppāda*), wherein intentional actions give rise to corresponding consequences through natural causes and conditions. This is a naturalistic explanation of the causal relationship between actions and their outcomes, grounded in cause and effect. Conversely, the concept of divine judgment and reward in faith-based religions relies on a supernatural divine authority who judges individuals' actions based on a set of moral ethical standards, rules, commandments, and the condition of their soul. This is a supernaturalistic explanation of the causal relationship between actions and their outcomes. Therefore, while there may be some surface-level similarities between the two concepts within a conventional understanding, they have fundamentally different ontological frameworks and explanations for how the relationship between actions and outcomes operates.

To claim that the Buddha or the Dhamma is a religion in the conventional sense is not accurate because the only way that one could do so is to overlay modern-day concepts onto them. Since modern-day concepts did not exist in the Buddha's time, it is an exercise in anachronism to apply them to the Buddha's teachings and methods. The fundamental elements of the Dhamma, including moral and ethical standards associated with one's actions, are inherently and ontologically distinct from the concept of divine judgment and reward. The truth of kamma (*paramatta sacca*) as taught by the Buddha is an independent and fundamental concept that has no ontological identity with the doctrine of divine judgment and reward. Therefore, to posit an absolute ontological identity between these concepts would be incorrect.

Buddhist Prophets?

Of the claims submitted by those who assert that the Buddha and the Dhamma constitute a religion, also emphasize that the Buddha mentioned prophets. However, the term "prophet" or its equivalent is not found in the Pali texts. Neither do appear any references to a religious figure who receives divine revelations nor predicts future events. Instead, the Buddha and other enlightened beings in the Pali texts are typically referred to as "teachers" or "great teachers" who have achieved enlightenment through their own efforts and insights. That being said, some passages in the Pali Suttas do mention individuals who made farsighted predictions, often within the context of the wider cultural milieu in which the Buddha lived and taught. For example, the *Cakkavatti Sutta* (DN 26) tells of a future ruler who will usher in a golden age, while the *Aggañña Sutta* (DN 27) describes a mythical past where humans lived in harmony with nature before succumbing to greed and violence. However, in general, the emphasis in the Pali Suttas is always on individual responsibility and the potential for personal liberation through the practice of the Dhamma, rather than on prophetic or apocalyptic predictions. The focus is on understanding the nature of reality, the causes of suffering, and the path to liberation, rather than on predicting the future or receiving divine revelations. There is no mention in the Pali texts where the Buddha or anyone else, spoke of a supernatural entity speaking to or revealing something "special" to just one person or entity. Neither is there any mention of the necessity of anyone that acts as an intermediary between some heavenly and earthly realms.

The concepts of prophets evolved throughout history, supported and promoted by faith-based religions,¹²² | ¹²³ which is most evident during the ancient Hebrew,¹²⁴ Greek and Roman civilizations as well as Islam. Conversely, the Buddha did not claim to be a messenger of a divine entity and did not transmit divine messages. Instead, he taught the path to liberation and enlightenment through personal experience and understanding of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. The Buddha encouraged his followers to use their own intelligence and wisdom to test his teachings, rather than blindly accepting them based on faith. This approach to mental awakening places the responsibility of understanding and liberation on the individual, rather than relying on external authority or interpretation.

¹²² **Prophets in the Hebrew Texts:** Src:

<https://oxfordre.com/religion/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-109>

¹²³ **Prophets of Christianity:** Src: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophets_of_Christianity

¹²⁴ Hebrew Prophets: <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/list-of-jewish-prophets>

It is quite curious indeed that in Wikipedia the entry for “Prophet” of the World’s various religions, Buddhism is nowhere to be found.¹²⁵ This in yet another element of religion that is missing from the Dhamma. And yet, there are those who claim that Buddhism also has prophets despite the fact that several authorities listed in Wikipedia do not cite Buddhism among the ‘religions’ listed. A curious, no pun intended, revelation indeed.

Prophetic types of accounts are common among many religious texts, where the revelations or teachings of supernatural divine beings, such as gods, angels, demons and saints, are said to have given knowledge to specific individuals, who then become the interpreters or messengers for these supernatural divine beings. The credibility of such claims is often based on nothing more than faith (the hope that something is true), but at the same time is open to interpretation and subjectivity.

However, the Buddha's teachings were based on his own personal experience and direct observation, not on divine revelations or prophetic messages. The Buddha encouraged individuals to engage in self-reflection and meditation to gain direct knowledge and understanding of the truth, rather than relying on faith in a particular religious text or messenger.

The aim of the Buddha's teachings was to achieve personal freedom and eradicate suffering, not to establish belief in a specific deity.¹²⁶ There was once a notion that Jesus was purportd to be named as a prophet in the Vedas, which predates Christianity by thousands of years. However, this notion was disproven as a later interpolation in the 1700s.^{127 | 128}

During the Buddha's lifetime, religion was limited to the various branches of the Vedas, Upanishads, and Rig Veda. These texts were created by the early Indo-Aryan peoples, including the people of the Harrapan and Mohenjo-Daro civilizations prior to the Buddha's time.¹²⁹

Those who consider the Buddha’s teachings to be a religion often rely on general information about the the Buddha’s teachings obtained from both Buddhist and non-Buddhist websites. This information is then compared to the conventional definition of religion, without considering personal experiences through actual practice. Making such comparisons between the Buddha’s teachings and faith-based religion based on secondhand knowledge can only ever be intellectual fodder. This intellectual fodder is produced through assumption, creating anachronisms, and this is where the notion that the Buddha’s techings are similar to religion originates.

¹²⁵ Prophets in Buddhism: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophet>

¹²⁶ Joseph Smith’s Golden Plates: Src: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_plates

¹²⁷ Interpolation (literary): Def: “The process of adding words, phrases, or, entire sentences (depending on punctuation) to the Bible - and thus sanctifying the maunderings of a mere human as Holy Writ.”

¹²⁸ Jesus in the Vedas: Src: <https://www.sanskritimagazine.com/indian-religions/hinduism/really-prophecy-jesus-vedas/>

¹²⁹ Vedic Timeframe:

https://books.google.com/books?id=Q5kI02_zW70C&pg=PA106#v=onepage&q&f=false

Oh, the Anachronism of it All

Not many people are familiar with the term or meaning of *anachronism*. Anachronism is used to describe the representation of something in a way that is *chronologically inappropriate or out of place in its particular time period*. This can refer to a wide range of things, including language, customs, beliefs, attitudes, or technology, that are presented in a context where they do not fit historically. In other words, *an anachronism is something that is placed in or associated with the wrong time period*.

Anachronisms can occur in religion, politics, literature, art, film, and other forms of media, where *chronologically inappropriate or out of place* information or comparisons may be used intentionally or unintentionally. For example, a film set in ancient Rome that features characters wearing wristwatches would be an example of an anachronism.

In historical research or academic writing, anachronisms can be a serious problem because they distort the understanding of historical contexts and the accuracy of the information being presented. Therefore, it is important for historians, scholars, researchers and writers to be aware of anachronisms and to avoid them whenever possible. In general, anachronism is a concept that emphasizes the importance of historical accuracy and context. By avoiding anachronisms, we can gain a better understanding of the past and the cultural, social, and political factors that shaped it. Imposing modern concepts of faith-based religion onto the teachings of the Buddha is anachronistic. This is because the Buddha's teachings, as they have been preserved in early Pali texts, were primarily concerned with the problem of suffering and the attainment of liberation from it, rather than with the establishment of a religion.

The Buddha himself did not claim to be a god or to have any special divine status. He was a human being who had achieved enlightenment through his own efforts and was teaching others how to do the same. His teachings were not based on blind faith or the acceptance of religious doctrine or dogmas, but on a systematic investigation of the nature of reality and the causes of suffering. The Buddha emphasized the importance of personal experience and direct insight into the nature of reality. He encouraged his followers to question and investigate his teachings for themselves, rather than simply accepting them on faith. He also taught that liberation from suffering could be achieved through one's own efforts, rather than through the intervention of a divine being.

It was **only after the Buddha's death** that his teachings began to be organized into a formal religion (invention of the Mahayana form of Buddhism), and as these "organized" forms of Buddhism spread to different parts of the world, it was often influenced by local cultural and religious traditions. In some cases, this led to the development of faith-based practices and beliefs that were not originally part of the Buddha's teachings.

Simply stated: *Imposing modern concepts of faith-based religion onto the teachings of the Buddha is anachronistic because it is a distortion of the original teachings and their intended purpose.* While there are certainly many different interpretations and practices within the various forms of Buddhism created after the Buddha's death, it is important to recognize the fundamental difference between the Buddha's emphasis on personal experience and direct insight and the more supernatural-centric faith-based systems that have emerged over time.

Applying the concept of anachronism to aspects of the Dhamma, the Buddha, and ancient India to modern-day concepts of religion helps to gain a better understanding of the stark differences between these worldviews. For example, one of the key teachings of the Buddha is the concept of *anicca*, or impermanence, which refers to the idea that all things are in a constant state of flux and change. This idea was developed within the context of ancient Indian philosophical thought, and was based on observations of the natural world and human experience. We all know from our common experiences that “nothing last forever,” but we use this term mostly in relation to the material world. What the Buddha is emphasizing is that our lives, our thoughts; the things we think are true; the things we take for granted, the opinions and beliefs we so dearly cling to, are nothing more than mental constructs that are impermanent, have no grounding and are wholly dependent on other things that are also impermanent.

In contrast, modern-day concepts of religion often times place greater emphasis on the idea of the eternal and unchanging, particularly when it comes to beliefs such as an all-omnipotent unchanging supernatural divine being or beings, and the concept of eternal damnation or heavenly bliss. Conversely, the Buddha taught that no being is eternal; that all beings, in all realms of consciousness, all suffer some level of dissatisfaction and transformations of consciousness through rebirth. In perspective we can easily see the anachronism, which if applied to the Buddha's teachings, represents a distortion of his original teachings and their intended purpose.

Another example of anachronism is seen with the concept of kamma, which refers to the idea that actions have consequences, and that these consequences can carry over from one lifetime to the next. This concept was developed within the context of ancient Indian philosophical thought, likely passed down from the Buddha Kassapa who lived before Siddhartha Gotama, and was initially and over time became integrated with the Hindu belief in reincarnation. The Buddha rejected the concept of reincarnation because it supported the idea of a human soul. In other words, there was nothing to transmigrate from one body to another. Only the kammic energy affects the lives of humans. Rather, he taught the truth about the nature of human existence, what causes death and what causes birth and how this cycle is determined by the action of the laws of cause and effect or kamma.

In contrast, modern-day concepts of religion place greater emphasis on the idea of divine judgment or punishment, and are based on the belief in an afterlife that is fundamentally different from the cycle of birth and death. Faith-based religious doctrine teaches, or at least infers, that there is consciousness after the body dies. While there may likely be a kind of residual karmic energy connected to the stream of consciousness, once the body dies and the brain is no longer able to process input from the senses of the body, there is no consciousness. Again, the faith-based concepts and the concepts put forth in the Dhamma are so fundamentally different, it is difficult to see, let alone justify, how these could even be similar let alone be the same.

In general, applying the concept of anachronism to aspects of the Dhamma, the Buddha, and ancient India can help us to better understand the cultural and historical context in which the Buddha Dhamma teachings and practices developed. By recognizing the differences between these worldviews, we can gain a more nuanced understanding of the fundamental human questions that they address, and can appreciate the fundamentally different approach each has.

Applying the rules of ontology and anachronism, it is certainly a weak argument to state that the teachings of the Buddha align with the concepts of modern religious beliefs and practices because the claim fails to consider the significant differences in ontology, historical context, and cultural factors.

Ontology refers to the philosophical study of *the nature of existence*, and it is a key concept in understanding the differences between the teachings of the Buddha and modern religious practices. The Buddha's teachings were primarily concerned with the problem of suffering and the attainment of liberation from it, whereas modern religious practices may be based on a variety of different ontological assumptions, such as the existence of a divine being or beings, the importance of faith or dogma, or the acceptance of specific doctrines or creeds. Therefore, any argument that the teachings of the Buddha align with modern concepts of religious beliefs and practices must account for these significant differences through an ontological examination, which requires the removal of any application of anachronism.

In addition, historical context presents important considerations when comparing the teachings of the Buddha to the concepts of modern religious beliefs and practices. As I mentioned earlier, the Buddha's teachings were developed within the context of ancient Indian philosophy, and were based on a unique set of cultural and historical factors. Therefore, any comparison between the teachings of the Buddha and modern religious practices must account for a high potential for anachronism, given the historical and cultural differences of such a vast span of time.

Ontological Considerations¹³⁰

Ontology is the branch of metaphysics concerned with *the nature of being and existence*, and the study of what elements exist and how they can be related and grouped. In philosophy, *ontology deals with questions about the nature of reality and existence*. *Metaphysics* is a branch of philosophy concerned with explaining the fundamental nature of being and the world. Metaphysics deals with questions that go beyond the scientific explanation of the physical world, and asks what exists, what it means to exist, and how things come into existence. Metaphysics is often divided into two main branches: *ontology*, which is the study of existence and the nature of things, and *cosmology*, which is the study of the origin and structure of the universe. In metaphysics, philosophers consider questions such as: What is reality? What is the relationship between mind and matter? What is the nature of time and space? What is the meaning of life? What is the ultimate nature of existence?

Ontology can be used to compare Buddhism to modern religious philosophy, doctrine, dogma and practice by examining the fundamental nature of existence and reality as taught by the Buddha. In Dhamma ontology, the central concept is the doctrine of dependent origination (*Paṭicca Samuppāda*), which states that all phenomena arise in dependence upon other phenomena, and are therefore impermanent and subject to change. None of the World's religions offer this perspective about reality, only the teachings of the Buddha. This understanding of existence is in contrast to the idea of a permanent self or soul, which is a central belief in all religious traditions. On the other hand, religious ontologies posit the existence of a permanent, unchanging deity or deities, as well as a permanent self or soul that continues beyond physical death. This is in contrast to what the Buddha taught. Neither deities nor human beings are permanent nor possess a soul.

By examining these differences from an ontological perspective, it is possible to see how the teachings of the Buddha diverge from religious traditions and offer a distinct perspective on the nature of existence and reality. Additionally, an ontological analysis can help to highlight the similarities and differences between Dhamma philosophy and faith-based religious traditions, while providing insight into the unique aspects of the Buddha's teachings.

Dhamma ontology differs from the conventional worldview of religion in several key ways. In the teachings of the Buddha, as was mentioned previously, the central concept is the principle of dependent origination (or dependent arising), which states that all phenomena arise in dependence upon other phenomena, and are therefore impermanent and subject to change. This understanding of existence is in contrast to the faith-based religious doctrine of a permanent self or soul.

¹³⁰ **Ontological viewpoint of Religion:** <https://www.philosophyofreligion.uk/theistic-proofs/the-ontological-argument/>

The Goal of Practice

Probably the most obvious ontological difference is between the goal of faith-based religious practice and Dhamma practice. In conventional faith-based worldviews, existence is often seen as having a permanent, unchanging essence or substance, such as a soul or supernatural deity, which transcends the physical world. Firstly, the goal of conventional religious practice is to attain union with a supernatural entity that is considered to have a permanent existence. Secondly, the goal of faith-based practice is to secure a place in an afterlife that exists beyond the physical realm, which is also considered permanent. The Buddha Dhamma teaches that *the goal of practice is to understand the nature of reality and to attain liberation from the cycle of birth and death*. This concept is more practical in terms of human life, specifically for the gaining release from one's ignorance about what it is that causes human suffering. Another key difference is that the Buddha Dhamma does not posit the existence of a creator deity who governs the universe, rather the universe is seen as operating according to natural laws, rather than being controlled by a divine being. Therefore, ontology, as applied to the Buddha Dhamma differs from the conventional worldview of religion in its understanding of the nature of existence, the goal of practice, and the role of a deity or permanent essence in the universe.

Fear has a lot to do with why many people refuse to accept factual information that contradicts their beliefs and opinions. Those who act as guardians of an ideology, including those who are guardians of their particular adopted form of Buddhism, often reject proven truths due to investment in their own beliefs. Upon closer examination, it becomes clear that the reactions of such guardians are not aimed at protecting the Buddha, the Dhamma, or the Sangha, but rather their own views, opinions, and beliefs, which may not be grounded in a direct understanding of the Pali texts. It is a fact that many faith-based religious doctrines have evolved into authoritarian theocracies over time, despite having started with good intentions. Those who seek to categorize the Dhamma as a religion often do so with a desire to create an authoritarian theocracy, reminiscent of the Brahmins during the Buddha's time.

Now, the standard method for determining if two things are the same, and can therefore be considered identical, is referred to as possessing an ontological identity or identicalness. Ontological criteria evaluate various elements of various subjects, including linguistic aspects, concepts, definitions, philosophical elements, and others, to determine their identicalness. However, various forms of *Buddhism* that are presented as actually taught by the Buddha, is often a fabricated and altered version of the original Dhamma. Manufactured forms of *Buddhism* are a culturally and politically constructed representation encompassing only certain elements of the Dhamma, omitting any teaching that weakens their point of view or personal belief. An ontological comparison of the central tenets of conventional religion with the Buddha Dhamma reveals immense non-identicalness.

Overlaying the original teachings with the cultural or denominational religious traditions of conventional faith-based worldview models, can only be accomplished by manufacture, whereby such similarities are artificially created to fit an ontological identity. However, upon closer examination of the core teachings of the Buddha Dhamma, it is *not possible* to find or manufacture any similarity with the modern conventional faith-based religious worldview. To determine the identity between the faith-based religious systems and the Buddha Dhamma, as recorded in the earliest Pali texts, one must examine the elements of doctrines and practices of both.

In order for the categorization to be valid, proof of identity (identicalness) requires that the elements of each category be *fundamentally* identical. The argument for identity must prove the existence of sameness and how the two categories are related. To be considered the same, the argument for their identicalness must demonstrate the underlying relationship between them. At the core, establishing that the elements of each category are the same requires a clear understanding of the context in which the elements are used. Without a clear comprehension of the meanings of certain words or phrases used by the Buddha, any perceived similarity is distorted and cannot form a valid basis for an ontological argument. Consequently, any claims of identity or sameness cannot be substantiated.

What is Being Compared

Religion encompasses many different categories, including belief in and worship of a supreme supernatural being, belief in the existence of a human soul, the belief that supernatural entities have power over human lives, adherence to certain commandments, belief in supernatural retribution and judgment, rituals of prayer to supernatural beings, and offerings or sacrifices to supernatural entities. When asked to describe what these elements are, most people categorize them as "religion." These patterns of behavior and belief form a single ontological category, which is commonly referred to as "religion," and is widely recognized as such by the World.

When conducting an ontological comparison between the category of "religion" and the Dhamma, for the purpose of determining whether the claim that the Buddha Dhamma fits into the conventional definition of "religion," it is necessary to determine whether the elements of each system are identical. As previously stated, religion is a man-made construct, while the Dhamma is not. The Dhamma is permanent and unchanging because it represents natural truth, meaning that the Dhamma only contains elements that occur naturally, which is not something the elements of religion align with. Thus, there is no ontological consistency between the two, and the categorization of "sameness" or "identicalness" fails because the elements of religion are fundamentally incompatible with those of the Dhamma.

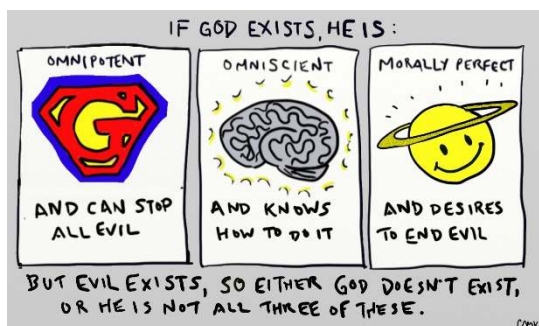
More specifically, the widely accepted conventional definition of religion includes many elements that are not based in nature nor found naturally in the world. On the other hand, the Dhamma as taught by the Buddha represents the true essence of existence and the truth about the nature of reality. The foundational model of the Dhamma is singular, comprising only elements of natural truth, while the foundational model of religion is complex and multifaceted, including elements that cannot withstand comparison with the truth about the nature of existence.

This analysis concentrates solely on doctrines, disregarding cultural customs, rituals, and ceremonies that have been established throughout history, including those adopted by different versions of Buddhism created after the Buddha's death. These created forms of Buddhism are highly influenced by culture and various Eastern religious traditions. This ontological comparison is made between the fundamental teachings of both faith-based religions and the Buddha Dhamma. The doctrines outlined in religious texts are compared to the teachings of Dhamma recorded in the Pali texts, which naturally limits the examination to the fundamental principles or doctrines taught by those who created or disseminated them.

When an ontological comparison is made, comparing the various manufactured forms of Buddhism to the authentic teachings of the Buddha, the outcome demonstrates substantial ontological disparities, not to mention several anachronisms. However, when comparing the *manufactured forms of Buddhism* to the doctrines of faith-based religions, many ontological similarities are discovered.

Although there may be similarities between the fabricated forms of Buddhism and faith-based religions, the true teachings of the Dhamma are unique and do not have any specific ontological relationships, in terms of sameness, with either.

Having previously established that faith-based religions serve as the source of the conventional worldview model of what constitutes a religion, the next step is to conduct an ontological examination of the elements of both the original Buddha Dhamma and the modern conventional concept of religion and religious practices to determine if they are identical. This requires proof that the elements of faith-based religious beliefs and doctrines are identical to those of the Buddha Dhamma. *It is important to note that an ontological examination of identity does not equate to mere similarity.* In order to establish ontological identicalness between the elements being compared, *they must be identical and not merely similar.*



It is not possible to use an ontological comparison between the Dhamma and the elements of faith-based religion to create claims of sameness or identity. The doctrines, principles, and practices of the Buddha Dhamma are inextricably linked and cannot be manipulated.

Although the framework of ontology can be applied to compare the Dhamma to faith-based religions, a syllogistic framework is also at play. The Buddha revealed the Dhamma, rather than creating it, and his teachings are intertwined with the Dhamma, forming a holistic completeness. The Dhamma possesses a natural uniformity that was only uncovered by the Buddha. Gaining a complete understanding of the Dhamma is a complex and ongoing process that requires a deep and nuanced comprehension of the various teachings and concepts involved.

While it is possible to isolate and separate individual teachings and concepts, these are all interconnected and must be understood in relation to one another in order to gain a complete picture of the Dhamma. The Dhamma is a vast and multifaceted system of teachings that encompasses a wide range of topics, including ethics, philosophy, psychology, and meditation. It is not simply a set of beliefs or doctrines, but rather a comprehensive approach to understanding the nature of reality and the causes of suffering, and to developing the skills and insights necessary to overcome it. To gain a complete understanding of the Dhamma, one must engage in a process of study, reflection, and practice that involves not only learning the various teachings and concepts, but also applying them in one's own life. This requires a deep and ongoing commitment to personal growth and development, as well as a willingness to question and challenge one's own assumptions and beliefs.

While it may be difficult to obtain a complete understanding of the Dhamma, it is nonetheless a worthy and rewarding pursuit that can bring profound benefits and insights into one's own life and the nature of the world. By engaging in this process with an open and inquisitive mind, one can gain a deep appreciation for the richness and complexity of the Buddha's teachings, and for the ways in which they can be applied to promote greater happiness, wisdom, and compassion for oneself and others.

The ontological category of religion is commonly understood to encompass a set of beliefs and practices centered around the worship of a supernatural entity. However, the Dhamma, which refers to the teachings expounded by the Buddha, and the methods by which these teachings were revealed, do not contain the same components as those that define religion. As such, it is not possible to establish an ontological identity between the two.

The concept of ontological identity, as it is used in this comparison, contains a significant flaw. The criteria used to establish an ontological identity between the Dhamma and the elements that define religion presuppose that the Dhamma can pass an ontological test of identity, which it cannot. An ontological test reveals that neither the Dhamma nor the direct experience gained through its practical application have any relationship with the theistic faith-based ontological elements that constitute the category of religion. For ontological identity to be established, a relationship between the two must be present. The elements that are deemed identical by an ontological test are dependent on one another, such that if one element cannot exist without the other, no identity can be established.

When the elements of the Dhamma are compared to those of theistic faith-based systems, a rigid dichotomy is exposed. Significant differences exist between the basic properties of each, making them distinctly discernable from one another. In the context of ontology, if two things being compared have noticeable differences, they cannot be considered the same. Conversely, if no differences can be found between the elements being compared, then they must be considered indistinguishable. This implies that the elements are identical, and no distinguishable features exist that set one element apart from the other.

In light of these considerations, it is concluded that the ontological identity between religion and the Dhamma cannot be established. The fundamental differences between the elements that define each concept preclude any meaningful comparison between them, highlighting the importance of taking into account the ontological properties of the entities being examined.

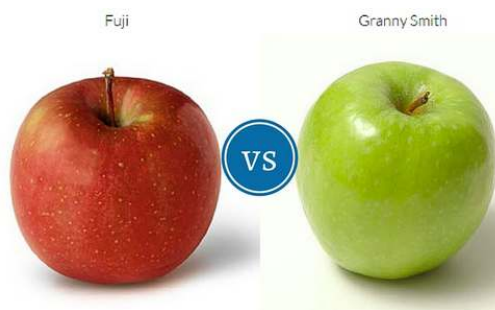
Discernibleness is Within the Context of the Doctrines

I contend that the ontological uniformity of the Dhamma teachings sets them apart from faith-based religions due to the distinctive methods employed by the Buddha in imparting his teachings. An ontological comparison reveals that the Dhamma is better characterized as a philosophy and an exploration of the human psyche, rather than a religion.

The concept of ontology rests upon the principle of identity, whereby two things that share the same properties and characteristics are considered indistinguishable. When two things fail to meet the criteria for identicalness or sameness, their properties are regarded as distinguishable, indicating that they are not the same. The comparison between the Buddha's teachings of the Dhamma and theistic faith-based religious systems is clearly distinguishable, as the elements being compared are not the same. However, those who claim that the teachings of the Buddha and/or the Dhamma are the same as a religion, implying an identicalness, actually reveal distinct differences that invalidate the claim of identicalness.

Through a rigorous and meticulous ontological analysis, one can discern that the claim that the Buddha's teachings and the Dhamma constitute a religion is purely based on superficial similarities. However, as any keen observer will attest, similarities do not necessarily connote sameness or identicalness. For instance, an apple and an orange are both fruits, yet they are clearly distinguishable from one another, despite sharing the commonality of being fruits. Likewise, while the notion of salvation in certain religious systems may include a divine element, the concept of liberation, as taught by the Buddha, does not. These ideas may share a commonality in their relation to spiritual well-being, but they are divergent in their essential nature, hence indicating a clear distinction.

This comparison underscores the exceptional character of the Dhamma teachings, which distinguish them from theistic, faith-based religions. Those who presuppose that there is only one fundamental category of identicalness between the Buddha's teachings and religion are in error, for closer examination reveals numerous elements in the Buddha's teachings that are utterly unique and dissimilar from those in theistic, faith-based religions.



To declare the teachings of the Buddha as "religion" without first undertaking an ontological examination is a mistake that is grounded in subjective opinion rather than objective fact. This erroneous classification stems from the belief that the fundamental teachings of the

Buddha are identical to those of theistic, faith-based religious systems. However, as there is no concrete evidence of sameness, the notion of ontological identicalness is invalid and therefore cannot be said to exist.

When we scrutinize the ontological nature of the Buddha's teachings, it becomes apparent that they differ significantly from the teachings of contemporary theistic, faith-based religions. In fact, these differences become even more evident through personal practice of the Dhamma. As one delves deeper into the teachings, they discover that many words and concepts in the Pāli texts, which may seem similar to those in faith-based religions or fabricated Buddhism, actually have entirely different meanings.

The correct understanding of Pāli meanings and the context in which words were used is crucial to comprehend the teachings of the Buddha. The translation of Pāli words into English may not always capture their true meaning, but as one becomes more familiar with them, the differences become increasingly clear. Thus, it is no longer appropriate to equate the teachings of the Buddha with the conventional understanding of "religion" or the concept of "religious."

The authenticity of any teaching attributed to the Buddha can be evaluated through an ontological inquiry that compares them with the original Pāli texts. Fortunately, in our time, there are numerous knowledgeable monks and scholars who have undertaken such investigations, thereby obviating the need for individuals to become Pāli language experts. These experts have meticulously scrutinized prior translations and furnished lucid and precise contemporary translations of the Buddha's Dhamma that do not rely on aligning Dhamma concepts with conventional expressions or notions associated with contemporary religious vocabulary.

In recent times, modern scholars have made substantial contributions to the understanding of Pāli words and phrases, and this has made large language models like OpenAI (ChatGPT) valuable resources for interpreting specific Pāli terms and expressions. However, it is always advisable not to rely exclusively on these sources for complete accuracy. It is always prudent to corroborate the responses provided by AI models with other sources, such as Sutta Central (suttacentral.net) or Pure Dhamma (puredhamma.net).

Elements of Dhamma Cannot be Isolated

As was mentioned earlier, the Buddha Dhamma is a complex and multifaceted system of concepts and practices that are deeply interconnected and interdependent. Understanding the relationships and connections between the different teachings is essential for gaining a deeper appreciation of the Buddha's insights about the nature of existence and for applying them effectively to one's own life. This is one reason why separating and isolating single teachings of the Buddha that appear to support the notion that they constitute a religion is harmful. That any particular teaching supports the concept that the Dhamma is ontologically the same as conventional modern-day religion is, well, not only a fallacy, but a fantasy.

The Whole of the Dhamma

The Four Noble Truths are a foundational concept of Buddhism, representing the Buddha's first and most fundamental teachings. The Four Noble Truths interrelate with one another, forming a coherent framework for understanding the nature of existence, the causes of suffering, and the way to end it.

The first Noble Truth asserts that life is characterized by suffering, which arises from birth, aging, sickness, and death. The Buddha recognized that suffering is an inherent aspect of existence and is universal in nature, affecting all living beings.

The second Noble Truth identifies the cause of suffering as craving and attachment. The Buddha observed that humans suffer because they crave things that they perceive as desirable or cling to things that they fear losing. This attachment generates negative emotions such as fear, anger, and sadness, which fuel the cycle of suffering.

The Third Noble Truth declares that the cessation of suffering is possible, and that there is a way to achieve it. The Buddha claimed that liberation from suffering is attainable through the complete cessation of craving and attachment. This state of being, called Nirvana, is characterized by peace, happiness, and freedom from suffering. The fourth Noble Truth presents the Eightfold Path as the means of attaining the cessation of suffering. The Eightfold Path outlines a practical and holistic approach to life that encompasses ethical conduct, mental development, and wisdom. The Eightfold Path comprises Right Understanding, Right Intent, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.

The interrelationship of the Four Noble Truths is such that the first two truths establish the problem, while the last two truths provide the solution. The first Noble Truth acknowledges the existence of suffering, while the second identifies its cause. The third Noble Truth affirms that there is a way to end suffering, while the fourth provides a practical path towards achieving this goal.

Overall, the Four Noble Truths work in concert to provide a comprehensive understanding of the nature of existence and a roadmap for transcending suffering. The interdependent relationship of these truths demonstrates how the insights and teachings of the Buddha build upon one another to form a complete and integrated worldview.

Attempting to isolate individual teachings or Pali texts to support claims of Buddhist religiosity is fraught with inconsistencies and inaccuracies, as the Dhamma represents a homogeneous whole. The Neyyatha Sutta emphasizes that taking the teachings out of context for any purpose other than their intended use is considered slander. Therefore, understanding the interdependence of the teachings is crucial for appreciating and applying the Buddha's teachings effectively in one's life.

Examining the Claims: *Reductio ad Absurdum* ¹³¹

Reductio ad absurdum is a type of logical argument that aims to prove a statement by demonstrating that its negation (denial) leads to an absurd or logical contradiction. The Latin phrase "*reductio ad absurdum*" literally means "*reduction to absurdity*." The argument works by assuming that the statement being disputed is false, and then deriving a logical contradiction from that assumption. The contradiction shows that *the assumption of the statement's falsity must be false, so the statement (of being false) must be true*. In other words, if the negation of a statement leads to absurdity, then the statement must be considered true. *Reductio ad Absurdum* may be challenging to grasp at first. However, when viewed through the lens of this logical argument, it becomes evident that those who assert that the Dhamma is religion are making an unsupported and baseless claim.

The *reductio ad absurdum* is a logical method of argumentation used to demonstrate that a particular claim or assertion is false by showing that it leads to absurd or contradictory consequences. This approach is often used in philosophy and mathematics to test the validity of a claim by following its implications to their logical conclusion. When comparing the Buddha's teachings to faith-based religions, the *reductio ad absurdum* approach could be applied to test the validity of claims made about these teachings. For example, some may argue that the teachings of the Buddha and the practices associated with them are the same as those found in faith-based religions. To test the validity of this claim, one could follow its implications to their logical conclusion and examine whether they lead to absurd or contradictory consequences.

131 *Reductio ad Absurdum*: (Latin) Explanation Src: <https://iep.utm.edu/reductio/>

One way to do this would be to compare the core principles and practices of the Buddha's teachings with those of faith-based religions, such as belief in a deity, prayer, and religious rituals. By examining the differences between the two, one could demonstrate that claims of similarity are based on superficial similarities rather than fundamental ontological identity. This would be a *reductio ad absurdum* argument, demonstrating that the claim of similarity between the Buddha's teachings and faith-based religions is false, as it leads to absurd or contradictory consequences when fully explored.

Furthermore, the *reductio ad absurdum* method could be used to challenge claims made about the Buddha's teachings that conflict with the core principles of Buddhism, such as the claim that the Buddha was a divine being. By following this claim to its logical conclusion, one could demonstrate that it leads to absurd or contradictory consequences that are incompatible with the Buddha's teachings. In this way, the *reductio ad absurdum* approach could be used to clarify and strengthen the core principles of the Buddha's teachings, while also dispelling misconceptions about them.

In summary, the *reductio ad absurdum* approach could be used to test the validity of claims made about the Buddha's teachings by examining their implications and logical consequences. This method of argumentation could help to clarify the core principles of Buddhism and dispel misconceptions about the Buddha's teachings by exposing contradictions and absurdities in claims that conflict with them.

The Claims

Common Claim #1: Life after death; *citing samsara, nirvana, rebirth, and kamma as proof of “sameness” with the doctrines of faith-based religion.*

Reality Check: One way to apply the *reductio ad absurdum* approach to the claim that "Life after death" according to faith-based religion is the same as the Buddha's teachings of samsara, nirvana, rebirth, and kamma is to examine the implications and logical consequences of this claim.

The Buddha's teachings on samsara, nirvana, rebirth, and kamma are not the same as the concept of life after death found in faith-based religions. In the Buddha's teachings, the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth (samsara) is a fundamental aspect of existence, but the ultimate goal is to break free from this cycle by achieving Nibbana. Nibbana is not an eternal life after death, but rather a mental state of release from the cycle of birth and death.

On the other hand, the concept of life after death in faith-based religions generally refers to the idea of an eternal soul or spirit that continues to exist after physical death, often in a heaven or hell. This concept is fundamentally different from the Buddha's teachings on samsara and Nibbana, which do not involve the eternal soul or spirit of an individual.

Therefore, the claim that the Buddha's teachings of samsara, nirvana, rebirth, and kamma are the same as the concept of life after death in faith-based religions leads to absurd or contradictory consequences when fully explored. By conflating the two, one would be ignoring the fundamental differences between them and misrepresenting the Buddha's teachings.

Furthermore, the Buddha's teachings on kamma, or the law of cause and effect, are different from the concept of judgment in faith-based religions. In the Dhamma, the consequences of one's actions are seen as natural and automatic, while in faith-based religions, the judgment of a divine being determines the consequences of one's actions.

Therefore, the *reductio ad absurdum* approach would demonstrate that the claim that the Buddha's teachings of samsara, nibbana, rebirth, and kamma are the same as the concept of life after death in faith-based religions is false, as it leads to absurd or contradictory consequences when fully explored. This would clarify and strengthen the core principles of the Dhamma while dispelling misconceptions about them.

According to Thanissaro Bhikkhu, samsara (lit. *sansara*¹³²) refers to the process of wandering, and nibbana means "a blowing out."¹³³ A closer examination of the Pāli meaning of nibbana (Sanskrit nirvana) reveals it to be a mental or psychological state¹³⁴ attained after liberation from the five khandas,¹³⁵ devoid of craving (*taṇhā*).

The entire context of the teachings focuses on ending kammic existence and has no connection to beliefs about life after death common to the faith-based religious systems. In this specific example, there is no possible comparison of the teachings of the Buddha to any theistic faith-based doctrine when considering the context in which they were given. Regarding the notion that rebirth supports the claim that the Dhamma is the same as theistic faith-based religion: no similarity can be found and hence, no identity (identicalness) exists.

The concepts of rebirth and reincarnation are not mentioned in either the Bible or the Quran. The idea of rebirth has been a controversial topic, with proponents and opponents engaging in heated debates. For instance, when Jesus spoke to Nicodemus and said, "*I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again*" (John 3:3, NIV), he was referring to spiritual rebirth rather than physical rebirth.

132 "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)" Pure Dhamma: <https://puredhamma.net/key-dhamma-concepts/san-dasa-akusala/?highlight=sansara>

133 Samsara: meaning – Thanissaro Bhikkhu:

<https://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/thanissaro/samsara.html>

134 Nibbana: Pāli Text Society: https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/Pāli_query.py?qs=nibbana&searchhws=yes

135 Five Khandas (e.g. Five Aggregates): <https://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/study/khandha.html>

At the time of the Christian Fifth Ecumenical Council, also known as the Second Council of Constantinople, which took place in 553 CE, the nature of the soul and the afterlife were defined. This council affirmed the existence of the human soul and its immortality, and rejected the teachings of the philosopher Origen, who had proposed a doctrine of pre-existence and transmigration of souls. The Council's condemnation of Origen's teachings is recorded in its official statement, which reads in part:

"If anyone asserts the fabulous pre-existence of souls, and shall submit to the monstrous doctrine that follows from it, let him be cursed."

While this statement does not specifically mention the concept of transmigration of the soul, it is often cited as an example of the Church's rejection of reincarnation and rebirth, which were seen as incompatible with orthodox Christian doctrines. Neither is there any mention of physical rebirth in the ancient Hebrew texts or the Synoptic Gospels. The closest reference is the need for a spiritual conversion consisting of a change in one's beliefs and point of view, in essence transforming one's 'mental' life; having a perspective like a child in order to enter the kingdom, as noted in Matthew 18:3 and Mark 10:15.

Since no faith-based religion maintains any doctrine or belief in rebirth, meaning another physical life after death of the body, the argument citing that because the Buddha Dhamma contains teachings related to *life after death*; citing *samsara*, *nirvana*, *rebirth*, and *kamma* as proof that the Buddha Dhamma is religion, is a fallacy, which represents errors in the reasoning of those making such claims.

Considering a Modern Explanation of Rebirth

The teachings of the Buddha regarding rebirth can be elucidated by natural laws of science, similar to the first law of Thermodynamics. This law asserts that the total energy in a closed system remains constant and cannot be created or destroyed, only transformed from one form to another. In relation to kammic energy, this scientific law aligns with the notion of rebirth. Since human consciousness is connected to the physical energy of the brain, it is plausible to argue that the natural law of cause and effect (kamma), which underlies rebirth, resonates with the law of conservation of energy. The energy of our intentional actions, expressed through volition (one's intentions), forms the essence of our kammic energy, which is imprinted onto our kammic profile, persisting beyond the physical death of the body.

Amit Goswami, a well-known Theoretical Physicist and a holder of a doctorate in Quantum Mechanics, makes the following statement concerning the probability of kamma in the quote below.

“Quantum memory¹³⁶ (energy memory) weights probabilities in favor of past experiences; this creates a predisposition, and it is through this predisposition that karma travels from one physical incarnation to another.”¹³⁷

Goswami is suggesting that our past experiences, or what he calls “quantum memory” (kammic profile) or “energy memory,” (*kammic energy- kammavāta*) can influence the likelihood of certain future outcomes, which is a concept that is reminiscent of the Buddha’s teachings of kamma. According to Goswami, the “quantum memory” that we accumulate over the course of our lives creates a kind of predisposition, or bias, towards certain types of future experiences or outcomes. This predisposition can then influence the probabilities of future events, making some outcomes more likely than others. He suggests that this predisposition is what carries over from one physical birth to another, which is the basis of the concept of kamma as taught by the Buddha. In this view, our actions and experiences in one lifetime can create a kind of “energy memory” (kammic energy) or predisposition that carries over into future lives, influencing the course of events and shaping various characteristics of future lives.

Common Claim #2: Founder of Buddhism: *Because the Buddha is the central figure and author of Buddhism, he holds the same position as other central figures of faith-based religions. In essence the Buddha is the author or founder of the religion in the same manner as God, Jesus and Mohammed.*

Reality Check: Flatly stated, this argument is not valid. While it is true that the Buddha is a central figure of the Dhamma, he is not the author of Buddhism. Buddhism, in the conventional meaning of the term, is a creation of modern humans. Here we are dealing with semantic meaning of what Buddhism is in the modern meaning of the term, which is in itself anachronistic. Buddhism, in the conventional sense, was never taught or even mentioned by the Buddha, and use of the term or anything that would imply or infer the modern conventional concept of “Buddhism” is nowhere recorded in the Pali texts. Neither is it accurate to claim that the Buddha was the author of the Dhamma. The Dhamma represents the truth about the nature of reality. If the concept of “Buddhism” did not exist in the time of the Buddha, how could the Buddha have been responsible for the creation of “Buddhism?”

To apply the *reductio ad absurdum* approach to the claim that the Buddha is the central figure and author of Buddhism, and that he holds the same position as other central figures of faith-based religions, one could examine the implications and logical consequences of this claim.

136 Quantum Memory: *ibid* “Physicist, Howard Carmichael, has shown by statistical calculations that the solution of nonlinear Schrodinger equations for a photon in a resonant cavity, also acquires conditioning, thus providing an independent verification of the idea of quantum memory.”

137 Goswami, Amit, “Physics of the Soul,” Hampton Roads Publishing, Ch. 7, © 2001

Firstly, it is important to clarify that the Buddha did not invent the Dhamma, but rather revealed it through his enlightenment. The Buddha is not seen as a divine being or the creator of the universe, but rather as a teacher who showed the path to liberation from suffering.

Comparing the Buddha to the central figures of faith-based religions, such as God, Jesus, and Mohammed, leads to absurd or contradictory consequences when fully explored. The Buddha is not seen as a deity, nor is he worshiped in the same manner as God is in faith-based religions. The Buddha did not perform miracles or claim to have supernatural powers, unlike Jesus and Mohammed.

Moreover, the Buddha did not seek to establish a religion in the traditional sense, but rather sought to teach the Dhamma as a path to liberation from suffering. The Buddha did not establish a hierarchy of priests or impose a set of dogmas, unlike the founders of faith-based religions.

Therefore, the claim that the Buddha is the central figure and author of Buddhism, and that he holds the same position as other central figures of faith-based religions, leads to absurd or contradictory consequences when fully explored. By equating the Buddha with the central figures of faith-based religions, one would be ignoring the fundamental differences between them and misrepresenting the Buddha's teachings.

Applying the *reductio ad absurdum* approach to this claim demonstrates that the claim that the Buddha is the central figure and author of Buddhism, and that he holds the same position as other central figures of faith-based religions, is false, as it leads to absurd or contradictory consequences when fully explored. Doing so clarifies and strengthens the core principles of the Buddha's teachings while dispelling misconceptions about them.

The Dhamma can be seen as relevant to multiple fields of human behavior and cognitive science, including psychology, neuroscience, and contemplative studies. For example, in the field of psychology, the Dhamma's emphasis on understanding the nature of suffering and the causes of suffering is consistent with modern psychological approaches, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, which aim to address the root causes of psychological distress. The Dhamma's emphasis on mindfulness and introspection also aligns with contemporary psychological approaches, such as mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, which use mindfulness as a tool for enhancing well-being and reducing psychological distress.

In neuroscience, the Dhamma's emphasis on investigating the nature of the mind and its relationship to the body is consistent with contemporary research on the neural basis of consciousness and mental processes. The practice of meditation, which is central to the Dhamma, has been found to have significant effects on brain structure and function, and is now an active area of research in neuroscience.

In contemplative studies, the Dhamma is seen as a rich tradition of contemplative practice and inquiry, which offers insights into the nature of consciousness and human experience. The Dhamma's emphasis on direct experience and inquiry aligns with contemporary contemplative practices and research, which aim to investigate the nature of consciousness and promote well-being through various contemplative practices.

Therefore, the Dhamma can be seen as relevant to multiple fields of human behavior and cognitive science, including psychology, neuroscience, and contemplative studies, and offers a unique perspective on the nature of reality and the human mind. The Dhamma is often described as a "path (*magga*)" or a "way of life (*jīvitam brahmacariya*)" rather than a set of beliefs, and it is characterized by its emphasis on personal experience, direct observation, and critical inquiry.

To assert that the Buddha is equivalent to Jesus, Mohammed, or other prophets central to faith-based religions is also ontologically incorrect. This is because the ontological assumptions and assertions about the nature of reality in these religious traditions primarily focus on human existence from the perspective of a supernatural deity or prophet. For instance, in the Abrahamic religions, God is commonly conceived as a transcendent, all-powerful creator who exists outside of the material world and has a personal relationship with his creation. This conception of the divine is characterized by notions such as divine sovereignty, divine providence, and divine intervention, which are absent in Dhamma ontology and cosmology.

In contrast to faith-based religion, the Dhamma teaches that the ultimate nature of reality is marked by impermanence, non-self, and the absence of any permanent or transcendent creator deity. While Dhamma cosmology does mention gods and other supernatural beings, these concepts relate more to levels of consciousness rather than physical entities, and which consciousness is considered subject to the same impermanence and suffering as all other forms of existence, and are not regarded as creators or rulers of the universe. Moreover, these entities have no connection with human beings nor do they have any influence on human beings. They also possess finite existences, like human beings, and are depicted as beings existing solely on a higher level of consciousness than human beings, without physical bodies.

The ontological assumptions and assertions about the nature of reality in the Abrahamic religions and the Dhamma are fundamentally distinct. Therefore, it is ontologically inaccurate to claim that the Buddha is the same as Jesus, Mohammed, or other central figures in these religious traditions. Despite some similarities in their ethical teachings or general approach to human behavior, the fundamental ontological differences between the Dhamma and religious traditions are too significant to ignore or overlook.

The concept of the Buddha being the founder of the Dhamma is a misperception, a fallacy (*micchādiṭṭhi*). The Dhamma is a natural law, similar to the laws of gravity and magnetism, and have always existed. Dhamma cannot be attributed to a single individual, including the Buddha. Instead, the Buddha simply taught the natural Dhamma law, which is referred to as Buddha Dhamma, which refers to the Buddha's method of teaching. This term also applies to the natural Dhamma taught by all Buddhas throughout history. Unlike the founders of the forms of Buddhism created after the Buddha's death, the conventional "idea" of the Buddha being the founder of Buddhism is incorrect and misrepresents the true nature of the Dhamma.

In Islam, the central figure is Mohamed the Prophet, who received the contents he wrote in the Quran from an unseen supernatural entity. Similarly, in Judeo-Christian faith-based religions, the central figure is Moses, and Jesus, who also received the contents of the Old and New Testaments from Yahweh, Jehovah, Elohim, or El, an unseen supernatural entity. However, when applying ontological principles, it becomes clear that Siddhartha Gautama, also known as the Buddha, holds no similarities with the central figures of theistic faith-based religions.

The Buddha was a human being, and was never considered to be a supreme deity, a supernatural entity or even a prophet who was given some secret knowledge by a supernatural entity. The Buddha simply revealed the natural knowledge of the truth about existence, as all Buddhas before him had done. There is a clear difference between the Buddha and the central figures of theistic faith-based religions, and the Dhamma is not, and has never been, a secret, but simply a natural understanding of the truth.

Claim #3: Salvation: *The Buddha teaches salvation, the same as any other conventional modern religion; that suffering can be transformed, and the "Buddha's salvation" is the end of wrong actions.*

Reality Check: This argument is replete with errors both of an ontological and anachronistic nature. Although it is true that the Buddha teaches that suffering can be transformed and the cessation of wrongful actions can be seen as a form of salvation in a conventional sense, the concept of liberation in Buddhism differs from the concept of salvation in theistic, faith-based religions. In theistic, faith-based religions, salvation is interpreted as being saved from one's inherent sin and eternal damnation through faith in a deity. In contrast, in the Dhamma, salvation is viewed as the attainment of liberation from the cycle of rebirth and the suffering that arises from craving and attachment. The Buddha did not teach the existence of a deity or supernatural being in connection with the idea of salvation. Therefore, the Buddha cannot be considered a savior in the same way as some figures in faith-based religions.

The Dhamma does not espouse any form of salvation in the conventional or traditional sense. Instead, the Buddha taught a path to liberation from ignorance and the suffering it engenders. The idea of liberation is not unique to the Buddha, but rather a fundamental aspect of the natural laws of the Dhamma.

The application of *reductio ad absurdum* to the claim that the Buddha teaches salvation in the same sense as conventional modern religions can lead to the conclusion that the claim is not accurate.

Firstly, the concept of "salvation" in conventional modern religions often refers to the attainment of an eternal afterlife or an existence in a heavenly realm, whereas the Buddha's teachings on liberation from suffering do not necessarily involve a belief in an eternal afterlife or a divine realm. Instead, the Buddha's teachings focus on the nature of suffering and the causes of suffering, and provide a practical framework for alleviating suffering and achieving liberation from it.

Secondly, the claim that suffering can be transformed through the Buddha's teachings is not necessarily the same as the concept of salvation in conventional modern religions. While both may involve transformation or liberation from suffering, the Buddha's teachings focus on the development of insight and wisdom, and the cultivation of wholesome qualities such as compassion, rather than relying on the intervention of a higher power or the attainment of a specific doctrine.

Finally, the claim that the "Buddha's salvation" is the end of wrong actions can be misleading, as it suggests that the attainment of liberation involves the cessation of all actions. However, the Buddha's teachings on *kamma* emphasize that actions and their consequences continue to operate even after the attainment of liberation, and that the cultivation of wholesome actions and the avoidance of unwholesome actions are crucial for the maintenance of liberation.

Therefore, the application of *reductio ad absurdum* to the claim that the Buddha teaches salvation in the same sense as conventional modern religions can lead to the conclusion that the claim is not accurate, as the Buddha's teachings on liberation from suffering are distinct in their focus on practical wisdom and insight, and do not necessarily involve the same concepts of eternal afterlife or divine intervention as conventional modern religions.

The Pāli word most commonly translated as "salvation" is "*mokkha*." However, the Pāli word "*mokkha*" literally means "liberation" or "release." It refers to a mental state of freedom from ignorance, craving, and attachment, which are seen as the causes of suffering in the Buddha's teachings. *Mokkha* is considered to be the ultimate goal of the practitioner's path and is achieved through the attainment of *nibbana* (nirvana).

On the other hand, salvation in faith-based religions is defined as being saved from one's inherited sin and the consequences of that inheritance, which includes death and separation from God, which is only made possible through Christ's death and resurrection. This concept is fundamentally different from the teachings of the Buddha.¹³⁸

The Pali word "*mokkha*" (or "moksha" in Sanskrit) is a central concept in the Dhamma, and refers to the *mental state of liberation* or release from the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth (*samsara*). Within the Dhamma philosophy, the cycle of birth and death is characterized by suffering, and the attainment of *mokkha* is seen as the ultimate goal of human existence. This state is achieved by the individual, by practicing the prescription given within the Noble Eightfold Path, which includes right understanding, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. Again, at the risk of seeming redundant, where in this Dhamma philosophy is there any hint of religiosity, religious doctrine or dogma?

The attainment of *mokkha* is characterized by the cessation of suffering (*dukkha*), and the experience of perfect peace and tranquility. This *mental state* is often described as the realization of the true nature of reality, and the recognition of the impermanence and non-self characteristic of all things. In this sense, *mokkha* is not seen as a state of annihilation or non-existence, but rather as *a state of profound mental understanding and wisdom*. It is worth noting that the concept of *mokkha* is central to the Buddha's teachings, in that it represents the core idea of release from suffering and the attainment of ultimate truth, which is a fundamental aspect of Dhamma philosophy and practice.

The concept of salvation in Islam also involves the belief in a Day of Judgment, when all people will be held accountable for their actions and evaluated by Allah. Those who have lived a life of faith, good deeds, and obedience to Allah will be granted eternal salvation and will enter Paradise.¹³⁹ On the other hand, those who have lived a life of sin and disbelief will be punished forever with no hope of release. However, it's also believed that genuine repentance can result in Allah's forgiveness and entrance into Paradise. In Islam, salvation is seen as a gift from Allah that is earned through good deeds, faith, and obedience to His rule of law.

Zoroastrianism, a religion with similarities to Judaism, teaches that salvation is obtained through following the example of the unseen deity Ahura Mazda. On the other hand, being born Jewish automatically makes an individual a favored member of God's community in Judaism, as is stated in the Torah.

138 Christian salvation/atonement: Stanford Encyclopedia of Theology-
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/christiantheology-philosophy/#BibAto>

139 Islamic salvation: <https://religionfacts.com/islam/salvation>

*“We Children of Israel are righteous. For the Torah says so. Of course, we must uphold the Torah, or otherwise we might cease to be righteous. But as long as we keep the Torah, we are righteous.” Therefore, Judaism does not specifically have a doctrine of salvation. “God’s salvation approaches; and finally, salvation is established in Zion for Israel, God’s splendor (Isa. xlv. 13). In this sense, then, the Messiah is a savior; his kingdom, one of salvation.”*¹⁴⁰

In most religious belief systems, an intermediary entity between a person's actions and salvation is necessary. However, the concept of liberation in the Dhamma does not involve such an intermediary. Instead, an individual's liberation or salvation is entirely within their own control, without the need for any outside intercession. The Buddha is not involved in the salvation of others.

In the Dhamma, the concept of life after death is related to the concept of rebirth, which refers to a level of consciousness that continues after physical death and becomes attached to another life upon birth. However, this process is not seen as a continuation of a personal self or soul, but rather as a continuation of kammic energies and mental qualities that have been accumulated in a person's life. In this sense, rebirth is seen as a natural and impersonal process that is subject to the laws of cause and effect.

In contrast, the afterlife teachings of the Abrahamic religions typically involve the belief in a personal soul that continues after death, and is judged by God according to its deeds during life. There is a focus on the ultimate fate of the soul, whether it be eternal life in paradise or eternal punishment in hell. This belief emphasizes the permanence of an unchanging existence once judgement by a supernatural entity. Opposite to this is the Dhamma teaching that one's future existence is by no means permanent, that an individual has the capacity to change the characteristics of their future.

Another difference between the Dhamma concept of life after the body dies, and the afterlife teachings of the Abrahamic religions, is the emphasis in the Dhamma on personal responsibility and agency. In the Dhamma, the continuation of consciousness and rebirth is seen as a result of an individual's kamma, or the actions and volitional intentions that they cultivate during each life. This places a strong emphasis on personal responsibility and the idea that individuals can shape their own destiny through their actions and intentions.

In contrast, the afterlife teachings of the Abrahamic religions often place a greater emphasis on the intercession of divine judgment and the idea that individuals are ultimately subject to a divine rule of law and subject to the will of a higher power. While personal responsibility is still emphasized, the ultimate fate of the soul is seen as being determined by God's judgment, rather than by the individual's actions and intentions.

140 Judaism salvation: <https://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13051-salvation>

Overall, while there may be some superficial similarities between the Dhamma concept of life after death and the afterlife teachings of the Abrahamic religions, the fundamental ontological assumptions and claims about the nature of what happens after the body dies are fundamentally opposite. Therefore, there is no ontological identity between them.

The concept of liberation described in the Buddha Dhamma may seem comparable to the idea of salvation in faith-based religious systems, but the meaning and context of the term "*mokkha*" clearly indicates that liberation in the Dhamma is a liberation from the consequences of one's own wrong or unbeneficial actions, fueled ignorance, desire, hate, and greed. The Buddha taught that individuals have the power to achieve liberation through their own understanding and efforts, as opposed to relying on supernatural intercession.

This is a stark contrast to the religious meaning of salvation, which often involves deliverance from the power of sin through supernatural means. The Latin word *salvationem*,¹⁴¹ used in the context of the Church, is a clear example of this. Therefore, it is not accurate to equate the teachings of the Buddha with religious beliefs based solely on a perceived similarity between the two concepts. The distinction between the two is evident when examining their underlying meanings and contexts. Thus, the Buddha's teachings cannot be considered a religious element in the same sense as the worldview religious meaning of salvation.

Lastly, and probably the most cogent difference between the concept of salvation, as taught in the doctrines of faith-based religious beliefs, and the liberation from suffering that the Buddha taught, is that the followers of faith-based religions have no mental image, understanding or comprehension of the condition of their existence after death. Conversely, the Dhamma provides a clear picture and understanding of the conditions of life after the death of a body. This extends even to the existence between rebirths. Dhamma provides an understandable explanation allowing for clear comprehension of what happens when the present body dies, and person's stream of consciousness, which is connected to one's kammic profile or kammic energy, and experiences rebirth into another body. In other words, rather than some illusionary concept of heaven or hell, which contains no reference to a physical body, the Dhamma teaches that life after the death of a present body is replaced with another physical body. Consider then, which one of these are you more able to visualize and accept as being probably true?

141 Salvation: Latin Etymology: "c. 1200, savacioun, saluatiun, sauvacioun, originally in the Christian sense, "the saving of the soul, deliverance from the power of sin and admission to eternal bliss," from Old French *salvaciu*n and directly from Late Latin *salvationem* (nominative *salvatio*, a Church Latin translation of Greek *soteria*), noun of action from past-participle stem of *salvare* "to save"

Claim #4: Holy People: *Buddhism contains divisions of “holy” people known as monks and nuns, which qualify Buddhism to be included in the conventional worldview meaning of religion.*

Reality Check: There are significant differences between the roles and functions of priests, monks, and nuns in faith-based religions and bhikkhus and bhikkhunis outlined in the Dhamma. In many faith-based religions, priests serve as intermediaries between humans and a divine power, performing rituals and leading religious services to connect people to the divine. They are often trained in religious doctrine and provide guidance on doctrinal matters to the faithful.

Monks and nuns in the faith-based religions are typically individuals who have taken vows of celibacy and in some instances have renounced material possessions in order to dedicate themselves to a life of doctrinal practice and service. However, although taking vows of poverty, most clergy of faith-based religions can maintain personal wealth and possessions and generally receive compensation for their services from a central religious authority. In many faith-based religions, monks and nuns live in monastic communities and engage in practices such as prayer and rituals to maintain a connection with a divine supernatural entity. They also teach others the doctrines and dogma of divinely inspired texts and are charged with maintaining the dogma of their particular form of faith.

In the Dhamma, *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunis* serve similar roles to monks and nuns in the faith-based religions, but there are significant differences. Like monks and nuns in the faith-based religions, they do take vows of celibacy. However, a major difference is that when a bhikkhu or bhikkhuni renounce their material possessions they are required to give up all material and financial possessions to the extent that they are not allowed to have any association with money, either physically possessing it or directing someone else to hold money they may have formerly possessed. Neither are bhikkhus or bhikkhunis ever compensated for their services or paid by any central authority that manages a temple or a monastery.

Bhikkhus and bhikkhunis do not serve as intermediaries between humans and any divine supernatural entity, nor do they perform religious rituals or lead religious services. Instead, their primary focus is on their own spiritual development, which they achieve through a rigorous program of meditation, study, and ethical practice. They may also provide guidance and Dhamma-related instruction to laypeople seeking to deepen their own practice, but their role is not that of a priest or mediator. Overall, while there may be some similarities in the roles and functions of priests, monks, and nuns in faith-based religions and bhikkhus and bhikkhunis in Buddhism, there are significant differences in terms of their focus, training, and activities.

The application of *reductio ad absurdum* to the claim that the presence of bhikkhus and bhikkhunis qualifies even modern forms of Buddhism as a religion in the conventional sense leads to the conclusion that the claim is not accurate.

Firstly, the presence of bhikkhus and bhikkhunis does not necessarily qualify modern forms of Buddhism as a religion, as the role of monks and nuns in Buddhism is distinct from the role of religious figures in conventional modern religions. While monks and nuns may play a significant role in the transmission of Buddhist teachings and the cultivation of the Buddhist path, their role is not necessarily associated with the same concepts of religious authority or hierarchy as conventional modern religions.

Secondly, the claim that the presence of monks and nuns in Buddhism qualifies it as a religion in the conventional sense ignores the diversity of Buddhist traditions and the ways in which Buddhism has evolved over time. While some Buddhist traditions may emphasize the role of monks and nuns as central to their practice, others may place greater emphasis on lay practitioners or may not have a distinct monastic tradition at all.

Finally, the claim that the presence of monks and nuns in Buddhism qualifies it as a religion in the conventional sense overlooks the distinct nature of Buddhist teachings and practices, which focus on the nature of suffering and the cultivation of wisdom and compassion, rather than adherence to specific doctrines or religious rituals.

Therefore, the application of *reductio ad absurdum* to the claim that the presence of monks and nuns in Buddhism qualifies it as a religion in the conventional sense necessarily leads to the conclusion that the claim is not accurate, as it ignores the diversity and distinct nature of Buddhist traditions and practices, and does not necessarily reflect the same concepts of religious authority or hierarchy as conventional modern religions.

It's also important to note that many belief systems, including some modern forms of Buddhism, may not fit neatly into the conventional modern definition of religion. While the presence of monks and nuns in Buddhism may be a factor in considering it as a religion, it is not the only factor and should be considered in the context of other elements of the Dhamma. Once again, here we have an example of attempting to retro-fit the Dhamma meaning of bhikkhu or bhikkhuni with conventional modern concepts of faith-based monks or nuns. And again, we are presented with an obvious anachronism. The common conventional modern meaning of "monk or nun," are not the same as the meaning of a bhikkhu or bhikkhuni. The Pāli word "*bhikkhu*" was commonly translated as "monk" by 19th century scholars in order to give the Pali words a conventional meaning that English speaking persons could relate to. However, the literal translation of bhikkhu is "*almsman*" for a male and "*almswoman*" for a female. More literally, the meaning of the word "bhikkhu" is "beggar."¹⁴²

142 Bhikkhu/bhikkhuni (monk): https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/Pali_query.py?qs=bhikkhu&searchhws=yes

As in previous examples, there is no ontological indistinguishability between the literal translation and the conventional definition of a monk or nun in religion. Again, while conventionally the terms may appear to be similar, they are not, a finding that comparing the actual meaning of a bhikkhu has no correlation with the conventional meaning of a monk or nun in the faith-based religions. All bhikkhus and bhikkhunis are mendicants, meaning they rely on begging for their subsistence.

Unlike religious figures such as priests, ministers, bishops, cardinals, hafiz or imams, bhikkhus and bhikkhunis are, according to the Pāli texts, primarily students and sometimes teachers, but they are all simply mendicants who do not receive compensation for their services.

The etymology of the English word "monk" as it relates to the modern-day concept of religion can be traced back to the Late Latin word "monachus" and the Greek word "monachos," which meant "solitary" or "single." In the early Christian period, the term "monk" was used to refer to individuals who had withdrawn from society to live a life of religious devotion. Later, in the Middle Ages, the term was applied to members of monastic orders who lived in communal settings and followed specific religious practices and doctrines. Over time, the concept of a monk became associated with the broader idea of religious figures who renounced worldly pursuits and dedicated their lives to religious pursuits, such as priests, nuns, and other religious figures who lived a monastic lifestyle. Today, the term "monk" or "nun" is generally used to refer to a member of a monastic order or to any religious figure who has renounced material possessions and worldly pursuits in pursuit of religious devotion.

Moreover, the use of the term "monastic" is somewhat misleading. Etymologically, the Greek origin of the word "monastic," which has come to mean "pertaining to a monk" in modern English, does not fully capture the nature of someone ordained as a follower of the Dhamma. The Greek word "*monastikos*"¹⁴³ simply means "solitary," and the original meaning of the word "ordain"¹⁴⁴ is to arrange, appoint, or designate.

In contrast, all religious leaders in faith-based religions receive a salary from a diocese or other central religious organization. While involved in the monastic level in the Catholic Church, and in all of the Protestant denominations I was once involved with, I always found the practice of clergy being paid to be at odds with the teachings of Jesus in Matthew 10:8-10, which advises against carrying money or accepting compensation for one's work.

"Don't take any money in your money belts — no gold, silver, or even copper coins. Don't carry a traveler's bag with a change of clothes and sandals or even a walking stick. Don't hesitate to accept hospitality, because those who work deserve to be fed."

¹⁴³ Monastikos: *Etymology* - <https://www.etymonline.com/word/monastic>

¹⁴⁴ Ordain: *Etymology* - <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=ordain>

Again, in Mathew 10:7, Jesus tells his disciples:

“Go and preach, the Kingdom of Heaven is near! Heal the sick, bring the dead back to life, heal those who suffer from dreaded skin diseases, and drive out demons. You have received without paying, so give without being paid. Do not carry any gold, silver, or copper money in your pockets; do not carry a beggar’s bag for the trip or an extra shirt or shoes or a walking stick. Workers should be given what they need.”

About the Word “Holy”

As I contemplated this claim, it became evident that it stated that Buddhism contains divisions of "holy" people. However, any individual who makes such a claim and argues that the Buddha Dhamma is a religion based on this one element, specifically the use of the phrase "holy people (*Ariya-sangha*)," has no understanding of the fact that there is no word "holy" in the Dhamma, as the conventional meaning of the word implies.

It is indeed unfortunate that early translators of Pali texts chose to use the word "holy" whenever they encountered the Pali word "*ariya*." However, the true meaning of the word "*ariya*" is "noble" or "pure," and it refers to someone who has achieved a higher mental state of awakening, such as what is called in the Pali texts, a *Sotapanna*. The term "*ariya*" is associated with key teachings of the Buddha such as the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, and other essential aspects of his teachings. That is why the teachings of the Buddha are sometimes referred to as the "*Ariya Dhamma*," or the "Noble Teachings."

In the early 19th century, translators of Pali texts used the English word "holy" to translate the Pali word "*ariya*." However, the conventional meaning of the English word "holy" does not accurately capture the meaning of "*ariya*" in Pali. In the Dhamma, the term "*ariya*" refers to individuals who have achieved a high level of mental purity, wisdom, and insight through practice and study of the Dhamma. The meaning of the word "*ariya*" is not related to a divine or supernatural power, which is often associated with the English word "holy." Instead, "*ariya*" describes a person's character and state of being. The Pali word "*ariya*" is often contrasted with "*anariya*," which refers to individuals who have not attained a higher level of knowledge, understanding, and insight.

In the context of the Dhamma, the term "*ariya*" means "noble," which more accurately captures its meaning in Pali. While the English word "holy" was a common translation for "*ariya*" in the past, it is not the best translation today, as it can carry connotations that do not align with the original Pali meaning. It is reasonable to expect that a guardian of a particular form of Buddhism, one who claims that Buddhism is a religion, should be aware of this fundamental aspect of the teachings.

Claim #5: Buddhist Organizations: *Because Buddhists have organizations and temples, this element qualifies Buddhism to be a religion.*

Reality Check: The notion that "Buddhism is a religion because it has organizations and temples" is fallacious. The mere presence of institutions such as organizations and temples are not enough to categorize any system as a religion. Defining religion is a complex matter that varies from culture to culture and belief system to belief system. Although religious institutions such as organizations and temples may be a common feature in several religions, there are other elements that must be considered as well, including the presence of deities, beliefs, rituals, practices, and the role of the community. Moreover, certain forms of Buddhism, like other belief systems, may not fit into the traditional definition of religion.

The existence of organizations and temples in Buddhism can be a factor in defining it as a religion, but it should not be the sole criterion. Building temples and creating organizations are not required by any rules or doctrines established by the Buddha. Furthermore, temples and monasteries do not hold the same significance in Buddhism as they do in Judeo-Christian traditions. There has never been a central organization or figure representing all of Buddhism, and temples and monasteries are not places-of-worship, as the concept of worship does not exist in the teachings of the Dhamma. The Buddha never established a central authority or a system of worship within Buddhism.

The claim that "Because Buddhists have organizations and temples, this element qualifies Buddhism to be a religion" can be subjected to *reductio ad absurdum* by taking it to its logical conclusion.

If we accept the claim that Buddhism is a religion simply because Buddhists have organizations and temples, then we would have to conclude that any organization or group with a physical meeting place would also qualify as a religion. This would mean that clubs, societies, and other secular groups that have a physical location would also be considered religions.

The Masonic Order, The Order of the Eastern Star, The Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine (Shriners), The Order of DeMolay, The Order of the Silver Cross, and the Rosicrucians, among several, refer to their meeting places as temples. However, this fact alone does not make these "orders" a religion. The term "temple" is often used to describe any building or location that is considered sacred or used for religious purposes. However, this does not mean that the organization that uses the location is itself a religion. In the case of the Masonic Order, while their meeting places may be referred to as temples, the organization does not hold religious beliefs or engage in worship of a deity. Therefore, the use of the term "temple" does not mean that the Masonic Order is a religion.

This further emphasizes the point that the mere presence of a physical location referred to as a temple or the use of other religious terminology does not make an organization a religion. Rather, it is the beliefs and practices associated with the organization that determine whether it can be considered a religion.

This *reductio ad absurdum* demonstrates that the mere presence of organizations and temples does not, in and of itself, make something a religion. Rather, it is the nature of the beliefs and practices associated with those organizations and temples that determine whether or not something can be considered a religion.

Even in the case of the modern concept of Buddhism, while there are organizations and temples associated with the practice, the lack of a central authority and the focus on personal experience and individual practice rather than adherence to a set of dogmatic beliefs sets it apart from conventional understandings of religion. Therefore, the presence of organizations and temples alone cannot be used as evidence that Buddhism is a religion in the same way as other faith-based traditions.

Since the time of the Buddha to the present day, there exists no single central figure, authority or organization that governs the entire community of practitioners of the Dhamma, unlike in the Abrahamic religions where central authorities oversee different aspects of the organization. The Sangha in the Dhamma, refers to the community of monks, nuns, and laypeople, which is decentralized in comparison to the hierarchical structures of faith-based religions. While individual monasteries and meditation centers may operate under the guidance of senior members, there is no overarching authority governing the Sangha. The Sangha operates based on mutual respect, with senior members providing guidance to junior members and all members supporting each other in their practice of the Dhamma.

Again, a conventional meaning of Pali words is often overlaid using English words and concepts, retro-fitting them onto the teachings of the Buddha, but which creates obvious anachronisms. This is exemplified by the mistaken belief that the presence of organized temples in Buddhism qualifies it as a religion. However, the lack of a central authority or system of worship within Buddhism makes this interpretation erroneous. It is akin to labeling organizations like the Rotary Club, the Lion's Club, the Moose Club, and the Masons as religions since they also have organized structures and temple-like buildings. It is important to understand the nuances of Buddhism beyond conventional interpretations to truly appreciate the beauty and wisdom of the Dhamma.

The notion of "*religious organization*" has undergone a significant evolution from its origins in antiquity to the modern-day conception. The contemporary notion of a religious organization is a social and political construct, which differs in meaning from organizations like the American Red Cross, the IRS, or the American Cancer Society. The use of buildings is often a determining factor in distinguishing a religious organization from others. However, in the Pali texts, such a phrase or anything resembling it does not appear in the modern sense.

The Pali texts date back to ancient India, where the idea of organized religion, as we understand it today, did not exist. Instead, the Buddha taught a path of spiritual practice and ethical conduct that could be followed by individuals and communities, without the need for a centralized religious organization. The Sangha, consisting of Buddhist monks, nuns, and laypeople, was more of a network of like-minded individuals who shared a commitment to the Dhamma rather than a formalized religious organization with a hierarchy and formal structures of authority like that of the Brahmins, Hindus, Jains or modern-day Abrahamic religions.

Although monasteries and meditation centers provided more structured environments for Dhamma practice, these institutions were not centralized and were largely self-governing. The Buddha's teachings emphasized individual responsibility and self-reliance, with each person accountable for their spiritual development, rather than relying on a religious organization or hierarchy to guide them.

*"Live with yourself as your island, yourself as your refuge, with nothing else as your refuge. Live with the Dhamma as your island, the Dhamma as your refuge, with nothing else as your refuge."*¹⁴⁵

Most modern-day Buddhist temples, especially those following the Theravada tradition, are not intended for worship in the same way as religious centers, temples, synagogues, or houses of worship dedicated to a supernatural entity (*dhammika sangha*). This is because Buddhism does not involve worshipping any deities, saints, or other divine beings, nor are prayers for forgiveness or blessings directed towards a higher power. Rather, temples and monasteries are considered gathering places for the sangha community, where individuals come together to learn, practice the teachings of the Dhamma, and participate in Dhamma talks and meditation. It is important to note that these buildings are not regarded as the "house of Buddha," the same as are regarded as "the House of God" by faith-based religions, but rather as physical spaces that facilitate the practice of the Dhamma.

The concept of temples dedicated to worshipping the Buddha or the Dhamma did not exist during the Buddha's lifetime. It is said that the first actual temple was built about two hundred years after the Buddha's death.^{146|147} However, it is important to note that the mere existence of gathering places like Buddhist temples does not automatically qualify them as religious centers in the same vein as those in faith-based religions.

¹⁴⁵ Lit translation: "Live with mental qualities (dhammas) as your island, mental qualities as your refuge, with nothing else as your refuge." <https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.26.0.than.html>

¹⁴⁶ **Oldest Buddhist Temple/Shrine:** <https://edition.cnn.com/2013/11/25/world/asia/buddha-birthplace-buddhist-shrine/index.html>

¹⁴⁷ **Discovery of the Earliest Buddhist Temple:** <https://www.voanews.com/a/earliest-buddhist-shrine-discovered/1798071.html>

Where the word “Buddhism” & “Buddhist” came from?

The terms "Buddhism" and "Buddhist" were coined by Western historians in the 19th century as they translated ancient texts from Sri Lanka and other Asian countries. The Pāli word used to form the term "Buddhist" was "*upāsaka*," while the Sinhala word was "*bhauddhayā*." These words were used during the time of the Buddha. Early translations attempted to provide a more conventional meaning to these Pāli words. Buddhist and Buddhism were conventional inventions and were only created after the discovery of Pāli Dhamma literature and the Asoka pillars in India. The term *upāsaka* means someone who stays close to the goal of eliminating defilements such as greed, hatred, and delusion. The word *upāsaka* is derived from the combined Pāli words "*upa*" (stay close to) + "*āsava*" (defilements) + "*khaya*" (eliminate/wear away). It is important to note that the terms Buddhist and Buddhism are modern-day human creations and were not taught or used by the Buddha. The secular use of these words has resulted in the blending of Dhamma practice with the concepts of faith-based religions. Many Westerners, including some monks and nuns, who identify as Buddhists are actually secular Buddhists, conforming to a form of Buddhism that was invented centuries after the Buddha's death.

<https://puredhamma.net/three-levels-of-practice/moral-living-and-fundamentals/a->

Misunderstandings about the Buddha and the Dhamma have led to the widespread belief that these buildings are religious centers, primarily due to their classification as such by governments for tax purposes. In reality, the places where the Buddha's followers gathered were called *maṇḍapaṃ*, (मण्डप) meaning "a roofed open hall," which did not carry the connotation of a religious center or place of worship.

During the Buddha's time, buildings that were specifically used for the worship of deities were referred to as *cetiyaṃ*¹⁴⁸ (चैतिय) or *devatṭhāna* (देवदुत्त), showing that a clear differentiation existed. Once again, we find clarity in meaning and context when Pāli words are understood. In this sense, the meanings reflect the absence of any ontological identity. And, at the risk of sounding like a broken record, we have yet another example of anachronistic reasoning; that of overlaying or retrofitting modern-day words and concepts, not only onto the Buddha Dhamma, but on to the Pāli words themselves. *Maṇḍapaṃ* (a roofed open hall) does not mean *cetiyaṃ* (a religious building), nor does *maṇḍapaṃ* mean anything close to the English word "temple" in a modern conventional sense of the meaning. It is not difficult to identify the obvious anachronism that exists here.

¹⁴⁸ Cetiya (cetiyaṃ)|Devatthana: A religious building or shrine, a temple; a sacred tree; a tomb; a temple dedicated to a deity

In the context of the Dhamma, devotion does not entail the submission to a supernatural entity or the seeking of refuge in a divine savior. Rather, the Pāli canon contains numerous examples that illustrate the profound feelings of love and affection (*pema*) that monks and nuns possess towards one another and the Buddha. The term "devotion" in Pāli texts is a translation of *saddha* or *saddhānugata*, which simply signifies the reason one dedicates oneself to practice.

The root meaning of *saddha* is "confidence," and the term *saddhānugata* in Pāli denotes the quality of being accompanied by confidence in the Buddha's teachings. This term is frequently employed to describe the mental state of an individual who possesses a deep and unwavering confidence in the Dhamma and is thus more inclined to follow the Buddha's teachings and engage in their practice. The notion of *saddhānugata* is significant since confidence in the truth and effectiveness of the Buddha Dhamma constitutes a necessary condition for progress along the path to awakening.

Through knowledge and understanding, along with practical application, individuals develop a deep and abiding confidence in the Dhamma, which helps them overcome obstacles, developing a more profound understanding of the nature of reality. It is important to note that the concept of *saddhānugata* is not the same as blind faith, belief without reason or belief by commandment. Rather, it is a **mental quality** that arises as a result of study, contemplation, and direct experience of the Dhamma, which are necessary components of one's mental development.

Additionally, the Buddha discouraged the wrong kind of emotional attachment to others, including himself, which is the case recorded in the *Vikkali Sutta* (*Majjhima Nikaya*).¹⁴⁹ Vikkali was reprimanded by the Buddha for his obsession with the beauty and austerity of the Buddha. Vikkali's was a case of misplaced dedication and devotion.

"Enough Vikkali! What is there to see in this vile body? He who sees Dhamma (truth), Vikkali, sees me; he who sees me, sees Dhamma (truth). Truly seeing Dhamma (truth), one sees me; seeing me, one sees Dhamma (truth)."

When the Buddha said to Vikkali, *"Enough Vikkali! What is there to see in this vile body?"* he was conveying the message that the body is not the self and that clinging to it as such is futile. This statement is in line with the Buddha's teachings on anatta, or not-self, which states that there is no permanent, unchanging self or soul within a person. The Buddha was encouraging Vikkali to see beyond the external appearance of the body and to understand that true liberation can only be found through realizing the impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not-self nature of all phenomena, including the body. By letting go of attachment to the body and the idea of a fixed self, one can achieve freedom from suffering and attain enlightenment.

¹⁴⁹ **Vikkali Sutta:** <https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn22/sn22.087x.wlsh.html>

Additionally, in the Buddha's reply to Vikkali he emphasized the importance of focusing on the Dhamma (truth) rather than being in the presence of the physical form of a Buddha. His statement emphasizes impermanence and unimportance of the physical body, which is subject to decay and suffering. Instead, he urged Vikkali to focus on the ultimate truth, which is the essence of the Dhamma, the Buddha's teachings, not the Buddha himself. He succinctly conveyed that the true essence of his teachings, the Dhamma, is what is most important, and that by understanding and following the Dhamma, one can truly understand the Buddha. In essence, the Buddha was emphasizing that the Dhamma, not his physical form, is the key to awakening and liberation from suffering.

The Buddha also cautioned against the dangers of ritualistic observances, warning that they could be mistaken for ultimate goals instead of tools for directing one's devotional emotions towards the right path. Incorrectly practicing devotion can lead to attachments and become a hindrance to one's practice and understanding of the Dhamma, rather than a help. In order to prevent this, the Buddha placed these practices under the category of *silabbata-paramasa*,¹⁵⁰ which is one of the ten fetters (*samyojana*)¹⁵¹ and one of the four types of clinging (*upadana*).¹⁵²

When practiced properly as a means and not as an end, certain rituals can promote positive mental states and reinforce social solidarity among those who hold similar values. However, it is important to note that many of the ceremonial practices commonly associated with various modern forms of Buddhism, were developed long after the Buddha's death, and were neither taught or approved by him.

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu (1926 - 1993), a famous and influential Thai philosopher of the 20th century was known as an innovative reinterpreter of the Dhamma, Buddhadasa fostered a reformation in conventional religious perceptions in his home country, Thailand, as well as abroad. Buddhadasa developed a personal view that those who have penetrated the essential nature of religions consider "all religions to be inwardly the same", but those who have the highest understanding of Dhamma feel "there is no religion."

¹⁵⁰ **Silabbata-paramasa** (see *ditthi kamma*) https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/Pali_query.py?qs=silabbata+paramasa&matchtype=default | *ditthi kāma*°, *silabbata*°, *attavāda*° D iii.230; the flood of false doctrine, the wilderness of groundless speculation Dhs 381, 1003, 1099, etc.; see °gata; -gaṇṭhi the web or tangle of sophistication.

¹⁵¹ **Samyojana** *Pāli*: संयोजन *Def*: "(Fetters) connection; fettering; an internal fetter." *Src*: <https://accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/an/an10/an10.013.than.html> | https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/Pali_query.py?qs=sannojana&matchtype=default

¹⁵² **Upadana**: *Pāli*: उपदण Def: "Grasping; attachment; fuel; substratum by means of which an active process is kept alive or going; fuel; supply; provision; adj. (-°) supported by, drawing one's existence from S i.69; ii 85 (*aggikkhandho* °assa *pariyādānā* by means of taking up fuel); v.284 (*vāt*°); J iii.342 *sa-upādāna* (adj.) provided with fuel S iv.399; *anupādāna* without fuel DhA ii.163. — 2. (appld.) "drawing upon", grasping, holding on, grip, attachment; adj. (-°) finding one's support by or in, clinging to, taking up, nourished by." *Src*: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Up%C4%81d%C4%81na>

Buddhadasa once wrote:

“Those who read books cannot understand the teachings, and what’s more, may even go astray. But, those who try to observe things going on in the mind, and always take that which is true in their own minds as their standard, never get confused. They are able to comprehend suffering, and ultimately will understand the Dhamma. Then they will understand the books they read.”

Claim #6: Religious Rituals & Services: *Buddhists have the same rituals or religious services like all other world-view religions, including weddings and funeral services. Some claim that chanting, meditation and pilgrimage are to be included as rituals.*

Reality Check: In considering whether Buddhists engage in rituals, we must first establish a clear definition of the term "ritual." The word has evolved over time and can refer to religious ceremonies, rites of passage, or prescribed modes of religious worship. However, it can also be used idiomatically to describe actions performed in a routine or standardized way, without necessarily having a religious connotation.

If we accept that the mere presence of rituals and services within even modern forms of Buddhism is sufficient to qualify it as a religion in the world-view sense, then we must also accept that any system or practice that contains rituals and services must also qualify as a religion. This leads to an absurd conclusion, as it would mean that any activity or organization that includes rituals or services, such as sports teams or fraternities, would have to be classified as a religion.

Therefore, the claim that the teachings and methods of the Buddha is a religion because of modern-day rituals and services is invalidated, as the presence of such practices alone is not sufficient to establish a religion. Rather, it is the underlying beliefs, values, and doctrines that determine whether a system is a religion or not.

When some claim that followers of the Buddha have the same rituals or religious services as faith-based religions, they interject the word "same," which automatically sets it under the rules of ontological examination. The argument is not valid because it depends on the interpretation and understanding of the difference between the Dhamma and the practices of individual forms of Buddhism created after the death of the Buddha. While some followers of the Buddha may perform similar rituals such as weddings and funeral services, others may not. Chanting, meditation, and pilgrimage might be considered ritualistic practices within various forms of Buddhism, but whether they are considered rituals vary among different forms of Buddhism and individual practitioners.

It is essential to understand the historical and current conventional application of the term "ritual" when discussing its application to Buddhism. As the term originally referred to religious rites, we must consider whether the actions being performed are religious in nature. This can vary depending on the individual and the form of Buddhism they practice. Therefore, the claim that Buddhists engage in the "same" rituals as faith-based religions is not a universally applicable statement and requires a more nuanced analysis. For example:

- "It's become a ritual for us to go out to dinner on Friday nights."
- "She has a daily yoga ritual that helps her start the day feeling refreshed."
- "The annual family reunion is a cherished ritual that brings everyone together."
- "His morning ritual includes a cup of coffee, reading the news, and listening to music, which is all part of a service that he provides to persons who are shut-ins."
- "The company's holiday party is a well-established ritual that employees look forward to every year."

It is crucial to accurately define the term "ritual" in the context of Dhamma practices. The application of the term as it relates to the activities of practitioners cannot be accurately used for the purpose of an ontological "identicalness" test comparing it to the practitioners of faith-based religions. The term is often used idiomatically to describe actions that are performed repeatedly, without necessarily having a religious connotation. Affixing a religious connotation to every activity considered a ritual would lead to a reduction ad absurdum conclusion that even mundane activities such as grocery shopping or paying bills are religious rituals, which is clearly not the case.

It is important to note that the original teachings of the Buddha do not include worshipping anyone or anything, and therefore the actions of the followers of the Dhamma in temples cannot be considered religious rituals or religious rites. There is a clear distinction between Dhamma practices and religious rituals. Chanting, meditation, and pilgrimage are not included in the category of rituals, as they do not involve worshipping the Buddha nor should involve the worship of any other supernatural entity or saint.

Chants are recited as a form of appreciation and honor for the Buddha's teachings, and Buddhist monks and nuns are prohibited from accepting money or charging fees for any practices, including chanting, meditation, funerals, or pilgrimages. In short, the use of the term "ritual" in a religious sense to describe the activities of practitioners is inappropriate and inaccurate.

The term translated as "ritual" in the Pali texts is "*yajana-kamma*," and is differentiated from "religious" rituals by the non-conjoined word "*yajana*." In Pali, "*yajana-kamma*" refers specifically to the act of performing a ceremony or ritual, whereas "*yajana*" can refer to both the act of performing a ritual and the ritual itself.

In the Pali language, the term "*yajana*" is often used in a broader sense to refer to various types of *religious* rituals or ceremonies, such as making offerings to a deity, performing a puja or a chanting session. It can also refer to the intentions or motivations behind these rituals, such as cultivating gratitude, devotion, or concentration. "*Yajana-kamma*," on the other hand, is a more specific term that refers to the actual performance of a ritual or ceremony, rather than the meaning behind a ritual or ceremony. It emphasizes the action or behavior involved in performing a ritual, rather than the broader context of the ritual or the motivations behind it. Overall, both terms are related to rituals and ceremonies, but "*yajana-kamma*" emphasizes the specific action or behavior involved in performing a ritual, while "*yajana*" more often than not refers to a broader range of *religious* practices in general.

So, while the Pali term "*yajana-kamma*" has some similarities with the modern concept of ritual in faith-based religions, they are not identical. The term "*yajana-kamma*" refers to the performance of particular ceremonies or rituals, for the purpose of cultivating certain mental states, such as gratitude, and concentration, that can be helpful in the pursuit of liberation from suffering. The rituals themselves are not seen as ends in themselves or as expressions of devotion to a deity or deities in the same way that many modern religious rituals are.

So, while the Pali term "*yajana-kamma*" does refer to practices that can be seen as similar to rituals in some faith-based religions, the focus and meaning of these practices taught in the Dhamma are intrinsically different. The emphasis on the use of ritual in the Dhamma is on using these practices as tools to cultivate certain mental states, rather than as a way to express devotion to a deity or deities or are aimed at seeking the blessings of a supernatural being, such as a deity, saint, or god. For instance, in Catholicism, priests frequently recite the chant "*In nomine patris, et sancti, et spiritus sancti. Amen*," which invokes the Holy Trinity and calls upon the supernatural Sky God of Catholicism to provide blessings. Similarly, there are numerous rituals in the Jewish religion.¹⁵³ In the Islamic faith, the correct invocation of Allah is outlined in the Quran (Q 7:180):

"Call upon Him by His Names: The Generous, The Beneficent, The Munificent, The Acceptor of repentance, The Forgiver, The Powerful, The Free of Want and The Omnipotent. Call upon Him by those names, sing His praises by them, raise your hands towards Him with those supplications, and approach Him wholeheartedly."

153 Jewish rituals: <https://smcthejewishreligion.weebly.com/rituals-and-prayers.html>

Wedding Ceremonies

Evidence from archaeological sites of such civilizations as Mohenjo Daro, a pre-Buddhist Harappan civilization in India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, suggests that marriage was a secular rather than religious affair. This was also the case during the time of the Buddha, with no religious rituals necessary. Marriages were arranged between a man and a woman's father, with a fee exchanged upon acceptance. At a semi-public gathering, the husband would present his chosen wife and declare, "*This is my wife.*" While some elements of Hindu and Brahmin religious rituals, such as chanting and prayers, may have influenced marriage ceremonies during the Buddha's time, marriages were essentially a contract between a man and a woman's father (*vivāha kriya*).

With the arrival of colonialism in Buddhist nations, both Protestant and Catholic sacred wedding ceremonies were introduced. These ceremonies were not acknowledged by Buddhist communities or nations. Just as it was during the time of the Buddha, as it is today, marriage is not seen as a religious obligation, but rather as a means of procreation or an expression of romantic love. The association of marriage with religion in the present day, is mainly a civil convenience for governments for tax and legal purposes. In many faith-based religious traditions, couples who marry in a place of worship, such as a church, do so with the aim of receiving a blessing or the approval of a supernatural deity.

For some modern-day Buddhists, not all, if an individual believes that marriage will bring them happiness or is seen as a beneficial step towards awakening, then it is up to them to make that choice.¹⁵⁴ | ¹⁵⁵ While the Buddha did not discourage marriage, he did caution those who were eager to advance their understanding of the Dhamma that marriage may hinder one's progress on that path. This distinction is made between a "householder" who is married and one who has committed themselves to the path of awakening as a "stream enterer (*sotapanna*)."

Many modern-day Buddhist wedding ceremonies may contain elements from other faith-based religions, but these elements are not rooted in the original teachings of the Dhamma. Such cultural additions are not typically recognized by those who have a true understanding of the Dhamma. The practice of worshiping supernatural entities, prophets, saints, or deities is not part of the Buddha's teachings and will never be found in the Dhamma. It should be noted that those who claim that Buddhist wedding ceremonies are the same as those performed in faith-based religions are often associated with the various Mahayana forms of Buddhism. The Tibetan branch of Mahayana Buddhism has its own unique features, including Tibetan culture's recognition of Chinese Astrology, which is not present in the Buddha's teachings or the Pāli texts of the Dhamma.

154 Marriage in ancient Mesopotamia: <https://ehistory.osu.edu/articles/marriage-ancient-mesopotamia-and-babylonia>

155 Buddhism View on Marriage:

<https://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/dhammananda/marriage.html#ch4>

Any faith-based religious-like marriage ceremonies that are observed by so-called Buddhist organizations or temples, have adopted these rituals and ceremonies long, long after the Buddha's death. Such rituals and ceremonies were never taught by the Buddha.

Funerals

The publication "A Guide to a Proper Buddhist Funeral"¹⁵⁶ states clearly that a Buddhist funeral (*antyeshti/anta-kriya*) should be dignified and respectful, and that any practices that go against the Buddha's teachings should be avoided. There is no requirement for lavish ceremonies or the involvement of priests, and it is suggested that any donations be given to other charitable causes instead.¹⁵⁷ Some so-called Buddhist funeral ceremonies may resemble those of faith-based religions, but these are likely influenced by Tibetan or other cultural practices and are not part of the original Dhamma teachings.

In contrast, funerals in Christian denominations usually come with a fee, ranging from \$500 to \$1,000. However, Buddhist temples and monasteries do not have a fee structure for wedding or funeral services. Additionally, a Buddhist funeral or wedding *never* involves invoking the Buddha in the same way as faith-based religious ceremonies. There will never be a pronouncement like "*By the authority vested in me by the Buddha, I now pronounce you man and wife*" in a Buddhist temple or monastery.

Meditation Rituals?

The notion that meditation in Buddhism is equivalent to faith-based religious rituals such as prayer, is not supported by those knowledgeable of the Dhamma. However, many so-called Buddhists treat meditation ritualistically because they do not know or understand the Buddha's admonition against attaching oneself to ritual. The definition of ritual provided by advocates of this idea, such as is found on Wikipedia, does not accurately reflect the understanding of meditation (*bhavana*) in Buddhism.

"A ritual is a sequence of activities involving gestures, words, actions, or objects, performed according to a set sequence. Rituals may be prescribed by the traditions of a community, including a religious community. Rituals are characterized, but not defined, by formalism, traditionalism, invariance, rule-governance, sacred symbolism, and performance."

156 Guide to a Proper Buddhist Funeral: http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/buddhist_funeral.pdf

157 Guide to a Proper Buddhist Funeral: Section IV, pg. 12 ¶ 1 -
http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/buddhist_funeral.pdf

This definition of a ritual provided by Wikipedia is overly broad and would certainly apply to anything done repeatedly. However, this generalization is not accurate when it comes to the practice of meditation (*bhāvanā*) in Buddhism. While meditation may seem to fit into the definition of a ritual, it is not a prescribed sequence of gestures, words, actions, or objects. In meditation, the only suggested gesture is sitting in the lotus position with one hand cupped into the other with thumbs touching, but this is not mandatory. One can meditate in any position, even while walking. Also, meditation is not a tradition taught by the Buddha. Instead, the Buddha taught that breath meditation was to be used as an instrumental tool with the goal of awakening mindfulness.

Here again we must address an existing anachronism. The modern English word “meditation” was used by early Pali translators to assign a meaning to the Pali word *bhāvanā*, but this designation is not entirely correct. The Pali word “*bhāvanā*” is a combination of two Pali words: “*bhāva*” and “*anā*.” “*Bhāva*” basically means “becoming.” It refers to the ongoing process of becoming, as well as the state of being that arises as a result of that process. In the Dhamma, “*bhāva*” is often used in the context of rebirth or reincarnation, where it refers to the ongoing cycle of birth and death that perpetuates suffering.

The word “*anā*” means “non,” “not,” or “without.” When combined with “*bhāva*,” it negates the concept of becoming, suggesting an absence of that process. Together, “*bhava-anā*” refers to the process of mental cultivation, which involves the intentional cultivation of certain mental states while letting go of others (the *anā* part). Thus, *bhāvanā* is a deliberate effort to transform one's mental state and ultimately, to transcend the cycle of birth and death.

In essence, the concept of “*bhāvanā*” connects the idea of existence, or becoming, with the practice of non-existence, or non-becoming. By intentionally cultivating certain mental states and letting go of others, one can work towards the ultimate goal of ending the cycle of birth and death and achieving liberation from suffering.

According to the Pāli texts, *bhāvanā* is a state of consciousness, and the act of “becoming” that state of consciousness is viewed as a tool, a method for achieving the path to enlightenment. Rather than being a ritual, the Pāli word *bhāvanā*, literally means ‘becoming; a dwelling place.’¹⁵⁸ A correct understanding of meditation in the context of Nibbana reveals that it is a state of knowledge that leads to a change in one's being, leading to a place of dwelling in an understanding of Dhamma.

The idea that the Dhamma or the Buddha is a religion based on the practice of “becoming” something different from what one is, is misguided and is an incorrect application of the meaning of *bhāvanā*, another example of anachronism. Anyone with an understanding of even basic Dhamma, would know the difference between the conventional meaning of the word meditation and *bhāvanā*.

158 Bhāvanā: <https://suttacentral.net/search?query=bhavana>

Again, this brings to mind what the Buddha said in the *Nayattha Sutta*:

“Monks, these two slander the Tathagata. Which two? He who explains a discourse whose meaning needs to be inferred as one whose meaning has already been fully drawn out. And he who explains a discourse whose meaning has already been fully drawn out as one whose meaning needs to be inferred. These are two who slander the Tathagata.”

It is important to note that the physical actions or gestures involved in meditation, while they may seem to fit the definition of a ritual, are not considered to be a ritual in and of themselves. Rather, these actions serve the primary purpose of meditation, which is to gain a deeper understanding of the impermanence and suffering that is inherent in life. Those who cling to the illusion of permanence are themselves impermanent and subject to suffering, without any lasting sense of self. Understanding this truth liberates a student of the Dhamma from delusion and leads to the end of ignorance and craving, which is the ultimate purpose of meditation.¹⁵⁹

Buddhist Pilgrimage

Again, here we have an example of trying to fit a square peg into a round hole. Modern concepts of “pilgrimage,” with its religious overtones, does not extend across the board to the Buddha’s intended meaning. On his deathbed, he directed his followers to visit four sacred sites. These sites include Lumbini, where he was born; Bodhgaya, where he attained enlightenment; Sarnath, where he gave his first teachings; and Kushinagar, where he passed away. This guidance gave rise to the tradition of Buddhist pilgrimage, and these four locations now make up a pilgrimage circuit in southern Nepal and the Indian states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.¹⁶⁰ While some who are unfamiliar with the Dhamma may view these sites as places of worship or prayer, they are actually intended to allow visitors to recognize the Buddha’s impact on humanity and pay tribute to his accomplishments.

Once again, we have evidence of an anachronism. The Pali word translators used to equate with the English word “pilgrimage” is “*yatra*.” In Pali, the word “*yatra*” means a journey for the specific purpose of deepening one’s connection to the Dhamma and to develop one’s understanding of the Buddha’s teachings. *Yatra* is not just a physical journey, but also a mental journey. It is seen as an opportunity for personal growth, as well as a way to pay homage to the Buddha. During a *yatra*, practitioners engage in practices such as meditation or chanting the *Triple Gem* or *Ti Ratana* in Pali, where “*Ti*” means “three,” and “*Ratana*” means “gem” or “jewel.”

159 Meditation purpose of: <https://accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/story/bl015.html>

160 Buddhist pilgrimage: <https://tricycle.org/beginners/buddhism/buddhist-pilgrimage/>

These practices are intended to cultivate a sense of mindfulness, and gratitude while recognizing the Buddha's contribution to humankind. The full text of the *Ti Ratana* in Pali is as follows:

"Namo tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa" and in English is:

"Respect to the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Self-Enlightened One."

This chant is a form of respect paid to the Buddha, for his contribution of the Dhamma to humankind. Breaking down the chant, the title "*Bhagavato*" refers to the Buddha's unique nature, while "*Arahato*" means that he was worthy of respect. "*Sammāsambuddhassa*" means that the Buddha was perfectly self-enlightened, having attained complete and unexcelled awakening on his own. This chant is a way for Buddhists to express their respect for the Buddha and to reflect on his qualities and teachings. It is one of the most commonly recited chants in the Theravada school and is used in a variety of contexts, such as during meditation and other forms of practice. In Pali literature, the concept of *yatra* is often associated with the Buddha's own travels and teachings, as well as with the journeys of his followers. The Buddha himself encouraged his followers to engage in *yatra* as a means of deepening their understanding of the Dhamma on one's own path.

While *yātrā* is often translated as "pilgrimage," the concept and purpose of *yātrā* in the context of the Dhamma is not identical to the modern understanding of a religious pilgrimage. Evidence of this differentiation is contained in the **purpose** of *yātrā* in the context of the Dhamma, which focuses on an individual's state of mind, with an emphasis on deepening one's understanding of the Dhamma and cultivating qualities such as wisdom, mindfulness, and compassion. The journey to such sites mentioned by the Buddha is seen as an opportunity to engage in individual practices such as meditation, chanting, and acts of generosity, but with the sole purpose of gaining insight into the nature of reality and the path to liberation.

Conversely, the purpose of a religious pilgrimage in most faith-based traditions is focuses on demonstrating devotion, making offerings, and seeking blessings or favors from deities or holy figures. While spiritual growth and insight may also be a part of the faith-based religious pilgrimage experience, the primary focus is often on external acts of devotion rather than internal transformation.

While there may appear to be similarities, for example that one travels to a place of reverence or remembrance, there are significant differences between the conventional meaning of the word "pilgrimage" and the meaning of the Pali word *yatra*. For example, the practice of *yatra*, according to the Dhamma, is not tied to a belief in a higher power or a particular set of religious doctrines. Rather, *yatra* represents a means of deepening one's understanding of the Dhamma and one's own spiritual path. In contrast, faith-based pilgrimages are often tied to a particular religious tradition and may involve specific rituals, beliefs, and practices that are considered essential to one's salvation and service to a supernatural entity.

In some cases, faith-based pilgrimages seek divine intervention or blessings from a higher power. So, while there are certainly similarities between the concepts of *yatra* and faith-based pilgrimages, they are not ontologically identical, as they reflect different significant meanings, cultural contexts and understandings of the journey itself.

To assert such an all-encompassing meaning of *yatra* with the conventional meaning of the word “pilgrimage,” would be like asserting that when people travel to places such as the Ford Theater where Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, or Graceland, where Elvis Presley lived, are religious pilgrimages. The Ford Theatre and Graceland mansion are visited to recognize the achievements of the people who lived and died there. This fact does neither makes Lincoln or Elvis a religious figure, nor the Ford Theater or Graceland mansion, a religious pilgrimage site?

More Ontological Considerations

As an argument claiming that Buddhism is a religion simply because Buddhists participate in pilgrimages, it fails to pass an ontological test. Merely sharing a similar practice or characteristic with faith-based religions does not mean Buddhism is equivalent to a religion. Rather, a comprehensive analysis of the unique beliefs, practices, and motivations of each group is necessary to determine whether they are comparable in an ontological sense.

Moreover, this argument assumes that all pilgrimages are uniform in their context and purpose, regardless of the reasons and motivations behind them. However, the motivations, practices, and cultural significance of Buddhist pilgrimage are significantly different from those of faith-based religions. This statement oversimplifies and misrepresents the nature of Buddhist pilgrimage.

Certainly, it is worth noting that some individuals who identify as Buddhist philosophers, monks, and nuns, hold incorrect beliefs about Buddhism that were never taught by the Buddha himself. These misconceptions are not necessarily due to malicious intent, but rather limited exposure to or understanding of the Dhamma.

The defense of these hybridized Buddhist concepts raises questions about whether these claims stem from a distorted point of view or merely from an attachment and fixation on cultural or traditional beliefs, which were never taught by the Buddha. The degree of emotional response to challenges against the legitimacy of these beliefs may provide insight into the level of attachment to opinions and beliefs of hybridized cultural Buddhism that were never taught by the Buddha. For instance, writing a book or article that asserts a defense that Buddhism is a religion without a deep understanding of what the Buddha taught in the Pali texts quite possibly indicates a strong attachment to these hybridized Buddhist concepts.

The Buddha taught that wrong views lead to suffering and prevent one from fully awakening. He referred to these views as "*micchā diṭṭhi*" or 'false views.' Clinging to these views perpetuates ignorance, craving, and attachment, leading to the cycle of birth and death. The Buddha encouraged examining and questioning beliefs, developing right understanding, and relinquishing false views to progress towards liberation and peace.

In conclusion to this section, I am reminded of what the Buddha's teachings in the *Cūḷasihanāda Sutta* of the Majjhima Nikāya 11. In this Sutta, the Buddha teaches that even followers or monks can misunderstand the concept of *yatra*, or spiritual journey. The Buddha warns against the mistaken belief that true spiritual progress can only be achieved through ritual or extreme forms of asceticism or self-mortification, such as fasting, sleeping on the ground, or enduring extreme heat or cold.

Buddha explains to his student Sīha that such practices are not in themselves a guarantee of spiritual progress, and that they can actually be harmful *if they are not accompanied by a deep understanding of the Dhamma and the cultivation of wholesome qualities of mind and heart*. He goes on further to teach that true spiritual progress is not a matter of outward forms or practices or ritual, but rather of developing a deep understanding of the Four Noble Truths and cultivating the Noble Eightfold Path. He emphasizes that it is not necessary to engage in extreme forms of asceticism in order to make progress on the spiritual path. So, in essence, the *Cūḷasihanāda Sutta* warns against the mistaken belief that rituals and extreme ascetic practices are completely necessary for spiritual progress, and emphasizes the importance of developing wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental discipline through the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path. It is a reminder that even followers or monks can misunderstand the concept of *yatra*, and that it is important to approach the spiritual journey with a clear understanding of the teachings of the Buddha.

The concepts espoused by the Buddha in the *Cūḷasihanāda Sutta* are closely connected to the Buddha's teachings on attachment and clinging. The Buddha taught that suffering arises from our attachment to things that are impermanent and subject to change, such as material possessions, relationships, or even our own ideas and beliefs.

The practice of the Noble Eightfold Path, as taught in the *Cūḷasihanāda Sutta*, is aimed at overcoming attachment and clinging by cultivating wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental discipline. By developing a clear understanding of the nature of reality, we can begin to see through the illusions of the ego and the impermanence of all phenomena, and thus begin to let go of our attachment to them.

The Buddha also taught that attachment and clinging are at the root of our suffering, and that by letting go of these attachments, we can find freedom from suffering and achieve a state of lasting happiness. The practice of the Noble Eightfold Path is a means of developing the wisdom and ethical conduct needed to let go of our attachments and to cultivate a state of mind that is free from clinging.

Cattārimāni, bhikkhave, upādānāni. Katamāni cattāri? Kāmupādānaṃ, diṭṭhupādānaṃ, silabbatupādānaṃ, attavādupādānaṃ. Santi, bhikkhave, eke samaṇabrāhmaṇā sabbu-pādā-na-pariñ-ñā-vādā paṭijānamānā. Te na sammā sabbupādānapariññaṃ paññapenti—kāmupādānassa pariññaṃ paññapenti, na diṭṭhupādānassa pariññaṃ paññapenti, na silabbatupādānassa pariññaṃ paññapenti, na attavādupādānassa pariññaṃ paññapenti. Taṃ kissa hetu? Imāni hi te bhonto samaṇabrāhmaṇā tiṇi ṭhānāni yathābhūtaṃ nappajānanti. Tasmā te bhonto samaṇabrāhmaṇā sabbu-pādā-na-pariñ-ñā-vādā paṭijānamānā; te na sammā sabbupādānapariññaṃ paññapenti—kāmupādānassa pariññaṃ paññapenti, na diṭṭhupādānassa pariññaṃ paññapenti, na silabbatupādānassa pariññaṃ paññapenti, na attavādupādānassa pariññaṃ paññapenti.

Santi, bhikkhave, eke samaṇabrāhmaṇā sabbu-pādā-na-pariñ-ñā-vādā paṭijānamānā. Te na sammā sabbupādānapariññaṃ paññapenti—kāmupādānassa pariññaṃ paññapenti, diṭṭhupādānassa pariññaṃ paññapenti, na silabbatupādānassa pariññaṃ paññapenti, na attavādupādānassa pariññaṃ paññapenti. Taṃ kissa hetu? Imāni hi te bhonto samaṇabrāhmaṇā dve ṭhānāni yathābhūtaṃ nappajānanti. Tasmā te bhonto samaṇabrāhmaṇā sabbu-pādā-na-pariñ-ñā-vādā paṭijānamānā; te na sammā sabbupādānapariññaṃ paññapenti—kāmupādānassa pariññaṃ paññapenti, diṭṭhupādānassa pariññaṃ paññapenti, na silabbatupādānassa pariññaṃ paññapenti, na attavādupādānassa pariññaṃ paññapenti.

Santi, bhikkhave, eke samaṇabrāhmaṇā sabbu-pādā-na-pariñ-ñā-vādā paṭijānamānā. Te na sammā sabbupādānapariññaṃ paññapenti—kāmupādānassa pariññaṃ paññapenti, diṭṭhupādānassa pariññaṃ paññapenti, silabbatupādānassa pariññaṃ paññapenti, na attavādupādānassa pariññaṃ paññapenti. Taṃ kissa hetu? Imaṇhi te bhonto samaṇabrāhmaṇā ekaṃ ṭhānaṃ yathābhūtaṃ nappajānanti. Tasmā te bhonto samaṇabrāhmaṇā sabbu-pādā-na-pariñ-ñā-vādā paṭijānamānā; te na sammā sabbupādānapariññaṃ paññapenti—kāmupādānassa pariññaṃ paññapenti, diṭṭhupādānassa pariññaṃ paññapenti, silabbatupādānassa pariññaṃ paññapenti, na attavādupādānassa pariññaṃ paññapenti.

Evarūpe kho, bhikkhave, dhammavinaye yo satthari pasādo so sammaggato akkhāyati; yo dhamme pasādo so sammaggato akkhāyati; yā sīlesu paripūrakāritā sā sammaggatā akkhāyati; yā sahadhammikesu piyamanāpatā sā sammaggatā akkhāyati. Taṃ kissa hetu? Evañhetaṃ, bhikkhave, hoti yathā taṃ svākkhāte dhammavinaye suppvadedite niyyānike upasamasamvattanike sammā-s-ambud-dha--p-pa-ve-d-ite-.

Therefore, the concepts the Buddha taught in the *Cūlasihanāda Sutta* (above) are closely connected with his teachings on attachment and clinging, as they provide a framework for developing the wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental discipline needed to overcome attachment and to find freedom from suffering. The Noble Eightfold Path is a path of gradual training that leads to the gradual abandonment of attachment and clinging, and the attainment of liberation and lasting happiness. The English translation of the preceding Pali Sutta is as follows:

“Monks, there are four types of clinging. What four? Clinging to sensual desires, clinging to views, clinging to rules and rituals, and clinging to the idea of a self.

There are some monks and brahmins who hold the view that they have comprehended all clinging. However, they do not truly understand the full comprehension of all clinging - they only understand the comprehension of clinging to sensual desires, not the comprehension of clinging to views, clinging to rules and rituals, or clinging to the idea of a self. Why is this? It is because these monks and brahmins do not truly understand these three realms as they truly are.

There are some monks and brahmins who hold the view that they have comprehended all clinging. However, they do not truly understand the full comprehension of all clinging - they only understand the comprehension of clinging to sensual desires and clinging to views, not the comprehension of clinging to rules and rituals, or clinging to the idea of a self. Why is this? It is because these monks and brahmins do not truly understand these two realms as they truly are.”

There are some monks and brahmins who hold the view that they have comprehended all clinging. However, they do not truly understand the full comprehension of all clinging - they only understand the comprehension of clinging to sensual desires, clinging to views, and clinging to rules and rituals, not the comprehension of clinging to the idea of self. Why is this? It is because these monks and brahmins do not truly understand this one realm as it truly is.

Therefore, these monks and brahmins who hold the view that they have comprehended all clinging, do not truly understand the full comprehension of all clinging - they only understand the comprehension of clinging to sensual desires, clinging to views, clinging to rules and rituals, but not the comprehension of clinging to the idea of self.

In the *Sabbasava Sutta*-“The Beautiful” located in the *Samyutta Nikaya* (55.5), the Buddha defines who it is that is properly guided with respect to understanding the Dhamma.

“In the teaching of the Dhamma, a person who has confidence in a teacher and has proper understanding is properly guided. A person who has confidence in the Dhamma and has proper understanding is properly guided. One who practices morality with proper understanding is properly guided. One who is fond of good things in the noble path with proper understanding is properly guided. Why is this Bhikkhus?

This is because they have the proper understanding of the Dhamma, which is well known, well understood by those who are well trained, who have properly entered into it, who have fully entered into it, and who are fully awakened."

Claim #7: Methods & Practices: *The structure and methods of practice are the same in Buddhism as in world religions.*

Reality Check: The claim that the structure and methods of practice of the Dhamma are identical to those of other world religions is an ontological fallacy and an instance of reductio ad absurdum. The practice of the Dhamma has a distinct structure and methodology that sets it apart from the practices of faith-based religions. There is no commonality in the ultimate goal of practicing the Dhamma compared to the practices of faith-based religions, and the specific practices and teachings outlined in the Pali texts are unique to the Buddha Dhamma.

Unlike many faith-based religions, Dhamma practice does not involve the worship of supernatural beings, but instead emphasizes individual self-improvement and personal development. The focus is not on a place of worship, but on the individual's inner journey. This fundamental difference distinguishes Buddhism from other faith-based religions. If one were to isolate the structure of Buddhism and posit an ontological argument, such as "the structure of Buddhism is the same as faith-based religions," such an argument would be invalid. The purpose of the structure of practicing the Dhamma is fundamentally different from that of faith-based religions. The entire purpose of Dhamma practice is focused on understanding individual life experiences in order to identify and remove the causes of suffering, not on appealing to a supernatural entity for either a favorable afterlife or assistance in the present life.

The claim that the methods of Dhamma practice are the same as those of faith-based religions is inaccurate because the methods used in the Dhamma are fundamentally different from those used in faith-based religions. The subject of this claim, being "methods of practice," is too general to make an accurate comparison. The methods used in the Dhamma are focused on developing wisdom, ethics, and mental cultivation through practices such as mindfulness, concentration, insight meditation, and ethical guidelines such as the Five Precepts. The purpose of Dhamma practice is to develop a deep understanding of the nature of reality and to cultivate mental states that lead to the cessation of suffering.

In contrast, the methods used in faith-based religions are focused on the worship of deities, performing ritualistic practices, and adhering to religious doctrine and dogma as determined by a supernatural entity. The purpose of these methods is often focused on the attainment of a desirable afterlife or some other reward offered by the supernatural entity. Therefore, the claim that the methods of the Dhamma are fundamentally the same as those of faith-based religions is inaccurate because the purpose and types of practice employed in Dhamma are fundamentally different from those used in faith-based religions.

The Dhamma is fundamentally different from faith-based religions with respect to the purpose of method and practice, as exemplified by the concept of a *pacceka*buddha,¹⁶¹ a person who attains awakening independently without any interaction with a Dhamma teacher, temple, or monastery. The emphasis on self-reliance and personal responsibility in both method and practice in Buddhism stands in contrast to faith-based religions, which rely on organized rituals and a hierarchy of clergy as intermediaries between human beings and a supernatural entity, involving practices such as prayer, confession, and baptism, among others. The claim that the "methods of practice" of the Dhamma are the same as those of faith-based religions is negated by the fundamental difference in purpose, which centers on individual attainment of liberation from suffering in the Dhamma, rather than on achieving a connection or relationship with a supernatural entity as is the case in faith-based religions.

The Buddha stressed self-reliance throughout his teachings, from his first discourse to his final words, in contrast to faith-based religions, whose ultimate goal is centered on a supernatural entity and whose practices aim to achieve some form of connection or relationship with this entity, often for the purpose of attaining a desirable afterlife or other reward. The fundamental purpose of the "methods of practice" of the Dhamma is individual attainment of liberation from suffering, and the practices are aimed at the development of one's mental states leading to the cessation of suffering, rather than directed towards a supernatural entity or the attainment of a desirable afterlife. The goal of Dhamma practice is the attainment of a state of awakening to the truth about the nature of reality, rather than the achievement of a reward.

Additionally, the methods and practices of the Dhamma are grounded in the concept of dependent origination, which holds that all phenomena arise in dependence on other phenomena, including the idea that suffering arises in dependence on one's own craving and attachment. Thus, the practices of the Dhamma are aimed at reducing or eliminating craving and attachment, which are the root causes of suffering. In conclusion, the claim that the "methods" and "practices" or the "methods of practice" of the Dhamma are fundamentally the same as those of faith-based religions is not accurate, due to the fundamental difference in purpose and ultimate goal of these practices. The methods and practices of the Dhamma focus on the cessation of suffering, while the practices of faith-based religions are often focused on the attainment of rewards or a desirable afterlife.

161 *Pacceka*buddha: Private Buddha. One who, like a Buddha, has gained Awakening without the benefit of a teacher, but who lacks the requisite store of *pāramis* to teach others the practice that leads to Awakening. On attaining the goal, a *pacceka*buddha lives a solitary life. | <https://www.accesstoinight.org/glossary.html#pq>

Certainly, *reductio ad absurdum* can be applied to the claim that "the methods and practices of the Dhamma are the same as those of faith-based religions" by examining the fundamental differences between the two. As previously discussed, the Dhamma focuses on self-reliance and personal responsibility in both method and practice, while faith-based religions rely on organized rituals and a hierarchy of clergy who act as intermediaries between human beings and supernatural entities.

Furthermore, the purpose of the practices in the Dhamma is fundamentally different from the purpose of practices in faith-based religions. The ultimate goal of Dhamma practice is the individual attainment of liberation from suffering, while the practices of faith-based religions is focused on the attainment of rewards or a desirable afterlife as set by the will of a supernatural entity.

By contrasting the fundamental differences between the Dhamma and faith-based religions, it becomes clear that the claim that their methods and practices are the same is invalid. Any attempt to draw comparisons between the two is overgeneralized and ultimately fails to account for the fundamental differences in their purpose and ultimate goal.

Therefore, the use of *reductio ad absurdum* emphasizes the fallacy of the claim that the methods and practices of the Dhamma are the same as those of faith-based religions. The fundamental differences in their purpose, ultimate goal, and approach to self-reliance make it clear that such a claim is both ontologically invalid and represents an overgeneralization.

Claim #8: Requirement of Faith: Buddhists are **required** to have faith in the Buddha's teachings, even if they are not understood.

Reality Check: To begin with, the claim that Dhamma practitioners are required to have faith in the same way as those of faith-based religions is an inaccurate and invalid argument. This is discovered by the application of *reductio ad absurdum* to the claim that "Buddhists are required to have faith in the Buddha's teachings, even if they are not understood," whereby one could ask the question: "If someone were to have faith in something that they did not understand, then what exactly would they be having faith in?" If the teachings of the Buddha are not understood, then the concept of having faith in those teachings becomes meaningless.

Furthermore, the Buddha emphasized the importance of understanding and verifying his teachings for oneself through direct experience, rather than blindly accepting them on faith. In the Kalama Sutta, the Buddha says, "*Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing; nor upon tradition; nor upon rumor; nor upon what is in a scripture; nor upon surmise; nor upon an axiom; nor upon specious reasoning; nor upon a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over; nor upon another's seeming ability; nor upon the consideration, 'The monk is our teacher.'* Kalamas, when you yourselves know: '*These things are good; these things are not blamable; these things are praised by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to benefit and happiness,*' enter on and abide in them." (Anguttara Nikaya 3.65)

Therefore, the claim that Buddhists are required to have faith in the Buddha's teachings, even if they are not understood, is nullified by the fact that blind faith is not a central tenet of the Dhamma. Rather, the Buddha emphasized the importance of understanding and verifying his teachings through direct experience, and having faith in those teachings only after testing them and finding them to be true.

That the Buddha himself stressed the importance of individual investigation and personal realization over blind faith shows that individuals should investigate the teachings for themselves and see if they align with their own direct experience and reason. In the Pali texts this approach to understanding the Dhamma is known as "*ehi-passiko*," which translates to "come and see for yourself."

It is crucial to note that faith is not absent from the Buddha's teachings, but it has a different meaning than what is conventionally associated with it in faith-based religions. In Buddhism, the term "*saddha*," which is often translated as faith, actually carries a closer meaning to "confidence" rather than blind faith. While faith may be considered as a starting point, the ultimate basis for understanding the teachings is direct experience and personal investigation. The requirement of faith in the Buddha's teachings does not determine the ontological identity of Buddhism as a religion.

Moreover, suggesting that Dhamma practitioners are required to have faith in the Buddha's teachings cannot be used to prove ontological identity. Ontology pertains to the nature of being or existence, and the requirement of faith in the Buddha's teachings does not address this fundamental question. The concept of faith, as commonly understood in faith-based religions, cannot be accurately applied to Buddhism. Buddhism emphasizes the importance of direct experience and personal investigation as the ultimate basis for understanding the teachings, rather than requiring blind faith. It is this emphasis on personal experience and reason that sets Buddhism apart from faith-based religions.¹⁶²

In the conventional context of faith-based religions, faith is considered a spiritual belief in unseen objects of religious reverence. This belief is based on a spiritual insight, as defined in Hebrews 11:1 in the biblical texts.¹⁶³ The conventional definition of faith as the acceptance of a statement or proposition without complete evidence is not applicable to the Dhamma concept of *saddha*. *Saddha*, as used in Dhamma teachings, refers to a confidence-based belief that arises from direct experience and leads to an understanding of the truth. It is not based on the authority or veracity of another, but rather on the individual's own knowledge, reason, and experience.

¹⁶² **Saddha:** Pāli: सद्धा Def: "Credible, belief, believed to be, confidence of credibility." Src: https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/Pāli_query.py?page=675

¹⁶³ **Hebrews 11:1:** Src: <https://biblehub.com/hebrews/11-1.htm>

The claim that Buddhists are required to have faith in the Buddha's teachings, even if they are not understood, is a classic example of an ignorance about the purpose of the Dhamma. It is frankly absurd to suggest that one must have blind faith in something that they do not understand. Perhaps those making such claims are simply confused or have been misled. The role of faith in Buddhism is not the same as in faith-based religions, and it is not a requirement for practice. Instead, the Buddha emphasized the importance of personal experience and direct realization over blind faith.

In the Dhamma, the concept of "*ehipassiko*" means "*come and see for yourself*" or "*come and investigate for yourself*." This idea is a key element of the Buddha's teachings and emphasizes the importance of personal investigation and direct experience. The Buddha encouraged his followers to investigate his teachings and test them against their own experience, rather than accepting them blindly. This approach is in stark contrast to the blind faith required by many faith-based religions.

The vast body of Dhamma literature emphasizes the importance of personal investigation and direct experience based on confidence (*saddha*). This evidence includes the Buddha's own teachings, as well as the teachings of later Buddhist scholars and practitioners. The emphasis on personal investigation and direct experience is a consistent theme throughout the Dhamma. It is clear that blind faith is not a requirement for practicing, and those who suggest otherwise are simply misinformed and ignorant about the fundamental purpose of the Dhamma.

Therefore, the concept of "*ehipassiko*" implies an open-minded and non-dogmatic approach to the teachings of the Dhamma. The Buddha encouraged his followers to pragmatically question and challenge his teachings, rather than simply accepting them without critical thought. So, the concept of "*ehipassiko*" is an invitation to investigate and test the teachings of the Dhamma against one's own experience and reason, as a means of achieving a deeper understanding of the nature of reality and the end of suffering.

For over four decades, the Buddha taught the concept of *dukkha*, which encompasses suffering, unhappiness, and stress. This is not a complicated idea to understand, as suffering is a common human experience. The Four Noble Truths, the Buddha's first teachings, succinctly outline the existence of suffering and its nature. In essence the teachings state that: 1) Suffering exists. 2) There is a root cause of suffering. 3) There is a path to end suffering. 4) There are eight actions one can take to eliminate suffering and attain enlightenment about the true nature of reality. These eight actions are straightforward and include right ways of acting, thinking, speaking, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and concentration. All of these actions align with the first three truths, suffering, and the end of suffering. The Buddha did not require blind faith in his teachings, specifically the Four Noble Truths, as representing absolute truth. Instead, he taught that teachings should not be accepted solely on the basis of authority, tradition, or written text.

When a person is unable to comprehend a Dhamma teaching, it is their responsibility to seek the guidance of a wise elder monk with direct experience of the teachings or examine the teaching for themselves. The Buddha also did not mandate blind faith in any Dhamma teaching; rather, he taught that faith, belief, or confidence in the teachings could only arise from firsthand experience by applying the teachings in one's own life. This allows practitioners to gain understanding through their own direct experience and develop confidence in their truth. Once the Dhamma is understood, a person's focus shifts from the external world to an awareness of their inner mental processes, known as mindfulness. This process of learning and understanding is similar to any other form of learning, such as chemistry or mathematics, where truth or falsehood is verified through personal experience.

To reiterate, the word "*saddha*," which is commonly translated as "faith" in the Pāli texts, has multiple meanings depending on the context in which it is used. The actual meaning of the word is "to have confidence." For instance, the principle of rebirth is not to be blindly accepted, such as that a supernatural entity exists. It is up to the individual to examine and decide whether to accept or reject the concept.

Buddha died and only his teachings can impact an individual, meaning that the Buddha himself cannot force or require anyone to believe in anything. This is different from theistic faith-based religions where one must accept the idea of a supernatural Creator entity without question, as it is the foundation of all major theistic faith-based religions and is the only path to salvation from the consequences of sin.¹⁶⁴ The Buddha taught that confidence in the Dhamma develops through direct practice and personal experience, which allows one to see the full value and meaning of the Dhamma (truth). One gains confidence in the Dhamma through direct experience, not by faith alone, and it is only through direct experience that the practitioner can gain *saddha* (confidence).

Claim #9: Cultural Holidays & Traditions: *Inclusion of 'beliefs' in religious cultural holidays and religious traditions warrants proof positive that the teachings of the Buddha should be considered a religion in the worldview meaning.*

Alternate claim without "religion" as the determinant: *Inclusion of 'beliefs' in cultural holidays and traditions warrants proof positive that the teachings of the Buddha should be considered a religion in the modern worldview meaning.*

Reality Check: Oh my, where to begin with such a befuddling claim! It appears that the claimant is equating modern-day beliefs in religious cultural holidays and traditions with the teachings of the Buddha, but that is like comparing apples to orangutans.

¹⁶⁴ Pinnaduwaage, Dr. Lal Ariyaratna Quote: <https://puredhamma.net/dhamma-and-philosophy/buddha-dhamma-buddhism-religion/>

The sheer number of anachronisms in this claim makes your head spin. I dare say that an entire book could be written about the absurdity of such a claim. But let's cut to the chase, shall we? The claim that Dhamma practice is a religion is simply not ontologically valid. The inclusion of beliefs in cultural holidays and traditions does not necessarily make a belief system a religion. There are many other factors to consider, such as the nature of the beliefs, the practices and rituals associated with the beliefs, and the worldview or cosmology that they promote. These are all important factors that need to be examined in order to determine whether a belief system should be classified as a religion.

The application of *reductio ad absurdum* to the claim that inclusion of beliefs in cultural holidays and traditions warrants proof positive that the teachings of the Buddha should be considered a religion in the modern worldview meaning involves demonstrating the absurdity of the claim.

Firstly, the inclusion of beliefs in cultural holidays and traditions is not unique to religion. Non-religious holidays and traditions can also involve beliefs, such as the belief in Santa Claus during Christmas. Thus, the mere presence of beliefs in cultural holidays and traditions does not necessarily mean that the teachings of the Buddha should be considered a religion.

Furthermore, the claim assumes that the modern worldview meaning of religion is the only valid meaning. This is an oversimplification, as there are many definitions and interpretations of religion, both historically and cross-culturally. By limiting the definition to the modern worldview meaning, the claim overlooks the complexity and diversity of religious traditions.

Additionally, the claim ignores the fact that the Buddha explicitly rejected blind faith and encouraged his followers to test his teachings through personal experience. This is reflected in the Kalama Sutta, where the Buddha advises the Kalamas to not blindly accept beliefs, but to examine them carefully and only accept what is reasonable and beneficial.

Therefore, the claim that inclusion of beliefs in cultural holidays and traditions warrants proof positive that the teachings of the Buddha should be considered a religion in the modern worldview meaning is flawed and *reductio ad absurdum* applies as the claim leads to absurd or contradictory conclusions.

The problem with sweeping generalizations is that they can never prove ontological identity. An ontological identity is the distinct existence and nature of a particular identity, and it cannot be proven through a generalization. It requires a specific and detailed examination of the properties and characteristics of the identities in question. Simply making a generalization about a group of characteristics cannot prove the identicalness.

So, let's not get ahead of ourselves with this claim that Buddhism is a religion just because some modern-day believers have incorporated cultural holidays and traditions into their practice. The Buddha himself emphasized personal investigation and direct experience over tradition. And that, my friends, is the true essence of the Dhamma teachings.

It is true that the use of the term "beliefs" in relation to the discussion of whether the Dhamma is a religion is problematic. The word "belief" can have multiple meanings, and its usage in different contexts can vary widely. Therefore, it is important to define what is meant by "beliefs" in the context of religion before we can use it to determine the ontological identity of a particular belief system.

But even if we take the broadest possible definition of "beliefs," it still doesn't necessarily prove that a particular belief system is a religion. As I mentioned earlier, if beliefs were the only factor in determining whether something qualifies as a religion in the worldview sense, then the beliefs of political parties and various scientific fields would have to be labeled as religions based on their respective beliefs and observance of holidays. This, of course, is ridiculous.

To prove the ontological identity of a belief system, we must examine not only the beliefs themselves, but also the historical and cultural context in which they originated, the ways in which they have been transmitted and interpreted over time, and the practices and rituals associated with the beliefs being compared. Only by examining all of these factors can we truly understand the ontological nature of any belief system being compared.

In the case of the teachings of the Buddha, we can see that it has a rich history and cultural context, with a vast body of literature, along with cultural traditions that have been transmitted and interpreted over thousands of years. We can also examine the practices and rituals associated with the practices of various forms of Buddhism, such as meditation and the observance of holidays like Vesak, to gain a better understanding of its ontological identity. A generalized use of the term "beliefs" in relation to the ontological identity of a belief system is complex and requires careful examination of multiple factors. Simply labeling something as a religion based on beliefs alone is insufficient and lacks nuance. We must look at the broader context in which these beliefs exist to truly understand their ontological identity.

Yet, there is a third, and perhaps more efficient way of determining whether this claim is valid. Here again, we are faced with the specific differences between the meaning of the word "belief." In the Pali language the word that is used for the belief is *ditthi*. The conceptual meaning of the Pali word "*ditthi*" is broader and more nuanced than the conventional religious meaning of the word "belief." In the Buddhist context, *ditthi* encompasses not only beliefs or opinions about religious or spiritual matters, but also views and perspectives on philosophical, moral, and existential issues.

Moreover, the concept of *ditthi* in Buddhism is not limited to a passive acceptance of a particular set of beliefs, as is often the case with the word "belief" in the context of religious or philosophical systems. Instead, the Dhamma concept of *ditthi* involves a dynamic process of inquiry, reflection, and investigation, with the aim of developing a clear and accurate understanding of the nature of reality and the path to liberation.

Furthermore, the Dhamma concept of *ditthi* is closely linked to the idea of *right view* (*samma ditthi*), which is not simply a matter of adopting a set of beliefs or dogmas, but rather involves a process of developing a deep and experiential understanding of the Four Noble Truths and the Three Characteristics of existence. So, overall, while the word "belief" may be a useful approximation of the meaning of *ditthi* in certain contexts, the Dhamma concept of *ditthi* is broader, more dynamic, and more focused on experiential understanding than the conventional notion of religious or philosophical beliefs.

It is important to note that proving the ontological identity of religious beliefs can only be a subjective process, as it depends on the criteria and methods used to gather and analyze the data. Different individuals may have different interpretations and understandings of what constitutes proof of an ontological identity, but the rules of ontological examination are firmly set. Ultimately, the proof of an ontological identity of religious beliefs requires a thorough examination of the beliefs and their expression in the world, and a clear and consistent definition of what constitutes proof.

As previously mentioned, claimants would do well to be mindful of the fact that many so-called Buddhist ceremonial practices, holidays and traditions were developed centuries after the Buddha's death, and these were not directly sanctioned, taught nor suggested by the Buddha. Furthermore, there is no text in the earliest Pāli of the Dhamma that infers the existence of religious-like holidays and traditions. Many modern Buddhist holidays developed over the centuries are highly influenced by cultural traditions. As was mentioned before, upon examination of those who make such claims, one finds that these individuals most likely usher from a Mahayana perspective and not a Dhamma perspective.

Mahayana rituals and ceremonies provide many examples, such as in the Tibetan culture, which many Westerners have been exposed to over the last sixty years. If such a claimant wishes to put forth their opinions regarding such things, they should at least have a fair understanding of what the Dhamma says about such things. They would understand that the claim that *all* Buddhists observe and practice the traditional cultural holidays of the Mahayana sects is absolutely incorrect. This claim, in essence, is comparable to claiming that if an atheist or agnostic observes Christmas, hides eggs and candy for children in April, then they are Christians. The most commonly recognized Mahayana holy days:

- 1) **Buddha's Birthday (Vesak)**: Celebrated on the full moon day in May, this holiday commemorates the birth, enlightenment, and death of the Buddha.
- 2) **Asalha Puja Day**: Celebrated in July, this day marks the Buddha's first sermon and the establishment of the Buddhist community.
- 3) **Bodhi Day**: Celebrated on December 8th, this day marks the Buddha's enlightenment and his attainment of perfect wisdom.
- 4) **Ullambana Festival**: Celebrated in August, this festival honors the dead and is associated with the idea of releasing loved ones from suffering.

- 5) **Tibetan New Year (Losar)**: Celebrated in February or March, this holiday marks the beginning of the new year according to the Tibetan lunar calendar and is associated with renewal and hope.
- 6) **Avalokitesvara Day**: Celebrated in February, this day honors the bodhisattva of compassion and is associated with the idea of compassion and altruism.
- 7) **Manjushri Day**: Celebrated in March, this day honors the bodhisattva of wisdom and is associated with the idea of wisdom and insight.
- 8) **Samantabhadra Day**: Celebrated in April, this day honors the bodhisattva of action and is associated with the idea of ethical conduct and altruistic action.

These are just a few examples of so-called holy days recognized by followers of the Mahayana form of Buddhism. The specific holidays celebrated, as well as the manner in which they are observed, can vary widely depending on the cultural and regional context. Additionally, different Mahayana schools and traditions may have their own unique holy days and observances. Some of these Mahayana observances are mentioned by the Buddha in the Pali text, most are not.

The Buddha suggested specific observance days found in the Pali Canon, such as Uposatha Day, celebrated on the full and new moon, and associated with purification and renewing commitment to the Eight Precepts. Full moon day is associated with mindfulness and recollection of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha. The importance of these days is discussed in various suttas in the Pali Canon.

The Buddha also encouraged his followers to observe the days associated with important events in his life, such as his birth, enlightenment, and death. These events, collectively known as *Vesakha Puja*,¹⁶⁵ recognize the birth of the Buddha and is celebrated on the first full moon day in May, as this is the day on which the Buddha was born. Again, there is no astrological significance implied here. The significance of these events and their observance are discussed in several suttas, including the *Majjhima Nikaya* and the *Samyutta Nikaya*.

The Buddha only *suggested* the observance of certain days or times of the year, but for him to mean observing such days for the purpose of worshiping either himself, any religious object, deity or any person, is completely contrary to the Dhamma. The Buddha would not have contradicted himself. Whatever modern cultural holidays exist in *Buddhism*, and particularly in the Mahayana form, these are *all* post-Buddha creations and were not conscripted nor taught by the Buddha.

¹⁶⁵ Vesakha Puja: *Pāli*: वेसकख (vesakha) पूजा (puja) *Def*: “Name of the month Vesak: April/May; homage; to be honoured; honorable.”

Src: https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/Pāli_query.py?qs=p%C5%ABja&searchhws=yes&matchtype=exacthttps://en.dhammadakaya.net/activities/visakha-puja-vesak-day/

Followers of the Theravada school observe fewer special days compared to Mahayana traditions and faith-based religious traditions.¹⁶⁶ These events, however, are not considered holy days in the traditional sense, such as Christmas, Easter, Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, Pentecost, and Advent, which are associated with worshiping or invoking supernatural beings, gods, or saints.¹⁶⁷ The Theravada school of Buddhism views such theistic beliefs as arising from a misunderstanding of the nature of the self and reality.¹⁶⁸ The Theravada school reiterates the teaching of the Buddha, who stated:

"Theistic ideas and overall organized religion have the potential to drive someone insane, thus causing fanaticism or self-harm."

[It is worth noting that the name 'Theravada' in Pali translates to "school of the elder teachers." This particular school uses the ancient Pali texts, known as the Tipitaka, as its main source of Dhamma teachings. The Theravada school holds the belief that if a teaching or tenet is not found in the Pali texts, then it was not taught by the Buddha.]

The key distinction between religious holidays and the observances in the Theravada tradition is the purpose behind them, such that *none* of the observed days are meant for praying or worshiping the Buddha or any other Buddhist deity created after the death of the Buddha. From an ontological perspective, there is no requirement for indistinguishability or identity. The ontological distinction can be found in the context of the Dhamma, which holds a view that is opposite to the worldview of religious holy days.

Of the three main branches of Buddhism, Theravada, Mahayana¹⁶⁹ (Zen, Chan, Pure Land, Tibetan) and Vajrayana, it is only within the practices of the Mahayana branches that we see more commonality with various faith-based religious holiday observances. Mahayana branches frequently pray to various Buddhist saints, who are recognized for their specific bodhisattva qualities. The most well-known bodhisattvas and other enlightened beings in Mahayana Buddhism include:

¹⁶⁶ **Theravadin Buddhist Observance Days:** <http://factsanddetails.com/asian/cat64/sub415/entry-2817.html>

¹⁶⁷ **Christian Holy Days:** <https://www.dummies.com/religion/christianity/christian-holy-days-holidays-and-seasons/>

¹⁶⁸ **Theravada/Mahayana differences:** https://www.diffen.com/difference/Mahayana_vs_Theravada

¹⁶⁹ Mahayana Buddhism: "Mahāyāna can be described as a loosely bound collection of many teachings and practices (some of which are seemingly contradictory).[note 9] Mahāyāna constitutes an inclusive and broad set of traditions characterized by plurality and the adoption of a vast number of new sutras, ideas and philosophical treatises in addition to the earlier Buddhist texts." | <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahayana>

- Avalokiteśvara (Guanyin in Chinese, Kannon in Japanese) (legendary, not historical)
- Manjushri (legendary, not historical)
- Vajrapāṇi (legendary, not historical)
- Samantabhadra (legendary, not historical)
- Ksitigarbha (legendary, not historical)
- Maitreya (Future Buddha)
- Tara (legendary, not historical)
- Amitabha Buddha (legendary, not historical)
- Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche) (historical figure 8th-century)
- Nagarjuna (historical figure circa 200 C.E.)
- Shantideva (historical figure 8th Century monk)

These bodhisattvas and other enlightened beings are revered as spiritual exemplars and are often the focus of devotional practices and rituals in Mahayana Buddhism. Each of these beings is associated with specific qualities and attributes, and they are believed to be capable of helping practitioners attain enlightenment and overcome obstacles on their spiritual path. Other Mahayana saints are Milarepa, Longchenpa, and Tsongkhapa. Some of these so-called saints however, were actual people who contributed many commentary texts to Mahayana Buddhism¹⁷⁰ over many years, centuries after the Buddha's death.

Milarepa, Longchenpa, and Tsongkhapa are considered to be important figures in Tibetan Buddhism. Milarepa is a famous Tibetan saint and poet who lived in the 11th century and is known for his teachings on the practice of meditation and his poems of spiritual instruction. According to tradition, Milarepa was a former black magician who, through the guidance of his teacher Marpa, transformed into a highly realized master of the teachings of the Buddhist path.

Longchenpa was a 14th century Tibetan teacher and philosopher who was a major figure in the Nyingma tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. He is best known for his teachings on Dzogchen, the Great Perfection, which is considered to be the highest and most esoteric teaching of the Nyingma tradition.

Tsongkhapa was a 14th century Tibetan teacher and founder of the Gelug tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. He is known for his writings on Dhamma philosophy and his revival of the monastic tradition in Tibet. Tsongkhapa's teachings on the Middle Way philosophy and the use of the Lamrim meditation practice, which outlines the stages of the Buddhist path, are considered to be key aspects of the Gelug tradition. While there is some debate among scholars about the historical existence of these figures, many Tibetan Buddhists believe that they were real people who lived in Tibet and had a significant impact on the development of Tibetan Buddhism.

¹⁷⁰ **Mahayana saintss:** <https://www.beliefnet.com/faiths/buddhism/2000/06/the-saints-of-the-dharma.aspx>

Regardless of their historical existence, Milarepa, Longchenpa, and Tsongkhapa are considered to be meaningful and powerful expressions of the Dhamma teachings and ideals in Tibetan Buddhism and are revered as spiritual masters and teachers by many Tibetan Buddhists.

Theravada is considered to be a single, unified tradition within Buddhism, and there is not a large number of distinct branches within Theravada Buddhism. However, there are some regional variations and cultural influences that have resulted in different styles of practice and interpretation of the Dhamma teachings within the Theravada tradition. Some of the notable regional traditions within Theravada Buddhism include:

- **Sri Lankan Theravada:** This tradition is practiced in Sri Lanka and is known for its strong emphasis on monastic discipline and the study of the Pali texts.
- **Burmese Theravada:** This tradition is practiced in Myanmar (Burma) and is known for its emphasis on lay practice and the use of meditation in daily life.
- **Thai Theravada:** This tradition is practiced in Thailand and is known for its use of forest meditation practices and the strong influence of Thai folk religion on Dhamma practice.
- **Cambodian Theravada:** This tradition is practiced in Cambodia and is known for its strong emphasis on the use of ceremony in Dhamma practice.

These regional variations of Theravada Buddhism reflect the influence of local cultural and historical factors on the development of Buddhism in these regions. However, *despite these differences*, all Theravada traditions share a common commitment to the study and practice of the teachings of the Buddha as recorded in the Pali texts.

The difference between the Theravada school and Mahayana sects is readily apparent, as Theravada is not divided into multiple branches like the diverse Mahayana tradition. The Theravada school recognizes the Tipitaka, the collection of the Pali texts, as the authoritative source for the teachings of the Buddha. These texts are considered to be the closest representation of the Buddha's original words. Many academics view Theravada as the purest form of Buddhism, meaning that Theravada practice most closely aligns with the teachings of the Buddha. The name Theravada is derived from "*Sthavirīya*," meaning "elders," and refers to one of the early Buddhist schools that the Theravada tradition traces its ancestry to.¹⁷¹

¹⁷¹ **History of Theravada:** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Therav%C4%81da_Buddhism

“According to adherents' accounts, the Theravāda school derives from the concept of vibhajjavāda (doctrine of analysis), which was a division of the Sthāvira tradition that arose during the putative Third Buddhist council held around 250 BCE (BC) under the patronage of Indian Emperor Ashoka.”¹⁷²

However, the exact origins of Mahayana Buddhism, remains something of a mystery to scholars. The historical record shows Mahayana emerging as a distinctive school during the 1st and 2nd centuries CE (AD).¹⁷³ The timeframe between the formation of the Theravada school of elders and Mahayana Buddhism is 250 years. The Mahayana school was not formed until some 488 years after the Buddha's death (487 BCE/BC).¹⁷⁴

Claim #10: Supernatural Beings: *Buddhism includes heavenly beings, supernatural beings, gods, and demons? Proponents of such an argument include people who have achieved a certain level of self-awakening called Bodhisattas (Pāli) and Bodhisattvas (Sanskrit).*

Reality Check: This proposition; that Buddhism is a religion simply because the Dhamma mentions heavenly beings, supernatural beings, gods, and demons, as well as the existence of Bodhisattvas (Mahayana) as spiritual beings who have gained a certain level of enlightenment, is not an accurate proposition. While the Dhamma does include references to these, the assumption of this claim is that these have the same conceptual meaning and characteristics of beings mentioned in faith-based religions. The implication that the beings mentioned by the Buddha are identical in meaning or existence as those of faith-based religion, is only an assumption. That being said, we are dealing with some colossal assumptions in this claim. First of all, how is one to know for certain or prove that the Buddha was referring to these beings in a physical sense? Given the essence of the entire Dhamma, is it not more likely than not that the Buddha was referring to different levels, dimensions or realms of states of consciousness?

Our modern age of science has produced many theories that have proven to be correct with regard to understanding the nature of reality. Two of the most significant theories are “path integral” and “string theory.” Theoretically, path integral and string theory might find an application to the Buddha's teaching of the existence of other realms or dimensions.

¹⁷² **Theravada School timeframe:** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Theravāda_Buddhism

¹⁷³ **Origin of Mahayana:** Barbara O'Brian: <https://www.learnreligions.com/origins-of-mahayana-buddhism-450007>

¹⁷⁴ **Buddha birth/death date:** <https://imp.center/i/gautama-buddha-birth-date-death-date-276/>

The Buddha's teachings of other realms or dimensions, such as the realms of hungry ghosts, animals, and divas, are not directly related to the physical dimensions of space and time that are the focus of "path integral" and "string theory." However, it is possible to interpret the Buddha's teachings on other realms or dimensions in a more metaphorical or symbolic way. For example, some scholars and practitioners have interpreted the realms of hungry ghosts, animals, and gods as symbolic representations of different *states of mind* or *levels of consciousness*. In this interpretation, the teachings on other realms or dimensions can be seen as an exploration of the human mind and the different mental states that we can experience.

In this context, path integral and string theory may be used as a way to explore the properties and behavior of the mind and consciousness. For example, some researchers have proposed that consciousness may be related to quantum processes in the brain, which can be explored using the mathematical tools of quantum mechanics, such as path integrals.

Overall, while path integral and string theory may not be directly applicable to the Buddha's teachings on other realms or dimensions, these theoretical frameworks may provide a way to explore the properties and behavior of the mind and consciousness, which can be seen as an extension of the Buddha's teachings on the nature of reality and the human experience.

Therefore, it is possible to interpret the Buddha's teachings about other realms as referring to different states of consciousness rather than physical dimensions of space and time. The Buddha's teachings emphasize the importance of mental states and the impact they have on our experience of reality. In this interpretation, the realms of hungry ghosts, animals, and gods is seen as representing different *levels of consciousness* or *states of mind*.

For example, the realm of hungry ghosts can be seen as exemplified by the mental state of intense craving and desire, while the realm of animals is seen as a state of instinct and limited awareness. The realm of divas can be seen as a mental state of deep knowledge, understanding, insight and conscious awareness. This interpretation is consistent with the view that consciousness is a fundamental aspect of reality, and that different states of consciousness can give rise to different experiences and perceptions of the world. Path integrals and string theory, while not directly related to the Buddha's teachings on consciousness, may provide a way to explore the properties and behavior of the mind and consciousness, and may ultimately help us to better understand the nature of reality and the human experience.

One might be prompted to ask: How close in proximity would you say are the Buddha's teachings of consciousness and the current understanding of consciousness, considering the possible application of path integral or string theory? The Buddha's teachings on consciousness and the current scientific understanding of consciousness are two very different approaches to the study of this complex and elusive phenomenon.

While there are some similarities between the two approaches, there are also many differences. The Buddha's teachings on consciousness emphasize the importance of *mental states* and the impact they have on our experience of reality. The Buddha taught that consciousness is an ever-changing process that arises from a complex interplay of mental and physical factors, and that our perception of reality is shaped by our mental states and our attachment to them.

It is indisputable that some of the Buddha's teachings on consciousness seem to anticipate certain concepts and principles of modern physics. For example, the Buddha's teaching on dependent origination, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of all phenomena, is similar in some respects to the concept of entanglement in quantum physics. Additionally, the Buddha's emphasis on the impermanence and ever-changing nature of consciousness is consistent with the idea of the "flow" of information in physics.

It is however, important to remember that the Buddha's teachings on consciousness were not based on a scientific understanding of the physical world, but rather on his own insights into the nature of reality gained through meditation and contemplation. The Buddha's teachings on consciousness are part of a broader philosophical tradition that emphasizes the importance of introspection, self-awareness, and compassionate action.

While there are some similarities between the Buddha's teachings on consciousness and modern physics, it is unlikely that the Buddha had any direct knowledge of the physical principles underlying conscious experience. Instead, the Buddha's teachings on consciousness reflect his own insights into the nature of the mind and the human experience, as well as the cultural and intellectual milieu in which he lived. Overall, while there are some intriguing parallels between the Buddha's teachings on consciousness and modern physics, it is important to appreciate these teachings in their own context and to recognize that they reflect a different approach to understanding the nature of reality and the human experience.

Aside from all of these theoretical considerations, it must be remembered that the Buddha discouraged the worship of supernatural beings, stating that it was a distraction from one's conscious efforts to discover the true path of liberation from suffering. Perhaps he did so because he knew that such beings did not exist in the physical sense, but only in a mental state of consciousness. Just like the Buddha's teachings regarding the non-existence of a separate and distinct "self," his understanding of the human proclivity to create and become attached to forms, such as physical gods, and so forth, he stressed the "mental" nature of various types and levels of consciousness.

So, in essence the Buddha's mention of the "appearance" of a diva or a god, is more likely the arising of a particular mental state of consciousness. The Buddha taught that all beings are subject to the same laws of kamma and impermanence, and that it was only through the cultivation of wisdom and compassion, again, mental states, that one could achieve liberation.

All-in-all, is not liberation (nibbana) a mental state of consciousness? Is not the Bodhisatta (Bodhisattva) or the Arahant a mental state of consciousness more than anything else? If one was not aware of such mental states of consciousness then there would be no purpose for the Dhamma. Moreover, while the concept of Bodhisattvas is an important element in Mahayana Buddhism, it is not a requirement in all Buddhist schools. The Theravada school, for example, does not recognize the existence of Bodhisattvas, and instead emphasizes the importance of individual effort and personal liberation.

Now, applying *reductio ad absurdum* to this claim, we need to analyze whether the inclusion of heavenly beings, supernatural beings, gods, and demons in the Dhamma is sufficient to categorize it as a religion. The claim equates the concept of heavenly beings in the Dhamma with the supernatural beings found in faith-based religions, which can be considered an over-generalization of the concept of heavenly beings in Buddhism.

While the Pali texts mention devas and other beings, they are never referred to as physical beings, but rather as beings with a consciousness that is different from that of human beings. In Buddhism, devas are not worshipped, and there is no concept of a divine creator or omnipotent God. Devas are not angelic-like beings as they are represented in the faith-based religions. Rather, the concept of devas in the Dhamma is more in line with the concept of higher states of consciousness, or more specifically, a more refined or purified level of consciousness that can be attained through meditation and other human practices.

Furthermore, the inclusion of Bodhisattas and Bodhisattvas, who are considered enlightened beings that have achieved a certain level of self-awakening, does not mean that the Buddha's teachings should be categorized as a religion. The concept of a Bodhisatta is not based on blind faith in a supernatural entity but rather on the individual's personal mental development and progress on the path to awakening.

Therefore, the claim that the inclusion of heavenly beings, supernatural beings, gods, and demons in Buddhism is sufficient to categorize it as a faith-based religion is an over-generalization and does not accurately represent the unique concepts and practices taught by the Buddha. As such, *reductio ad absurdum* can be applied to this claim by highlighting the flaws in its argument and showing how it fails to account for the unique features taught in the Pali texts.

Therefore, the proposition that what the Buddha taught is a religion based on the mention of heavenly beings, supernatural beings, gods, demons, and Bodhisattvas is not an accurate proposition. The Buddha's teachings emphasize personal investigation and direct experience, rather than faith in a deity or external authority. While these beings are referenced in the Dhamma, their existence is not a central tenet of Dhamma practice, and the Buddha discouraged their worship as a distraction from the path to liberation.

Mention of Bodhisattvas in this claim appears to be more of a last minute “throw-in” addition for good measure, which does not actually apply to the foundation of this claim for the simple fact that a *Bodhisatta* (Bodhisattva) is a physical person who has achieved a higher state of consciousness, in the same way as a Buddha is a person who achieved the higher state of consciousness of being fully awakened known as nibbana.

It is undeniable that similarities exist between ancient Tibetan and Chinese cultures and Mahayana Buddhism. These similarities seem to support the idea of evolutionary adaptations of ancient beliefs that have been incorporated into various faith-based religions around the world. When it comes to the references of devas in the Pāli texts, which describe various realms inhabited by beings, it is not surprising that many people today are no longer open to the idea of such entities. This skepticism is likely rooted in our knowledge of past civilizations that worshipped mythological supernatural beings, such as the pantheons of Greek and Roman gods and goddesses.

The advancement of time, technology and science have shown that ancient beliefs in supernatural entities, such as the pantheons of Greek and Roman gods and goddesses, were simply myths created for various social and political reasons. The study of subjects such as astronomy, archaeology, anthropology, philology, and paleography has challenged the notion of spirits or otherworldly beings.¹⁷⁵¹⁷⁶ Historical research has uncovered the evolution and adoption of not only mythological gods and goddesses, but the ideas and concepts behind them. Despite this, the idea of immortality remains a common characteristic thread in the depiction of these entities.

The Pāli texts mention devas, who are beings residing in different realms. While the word “deva” in Pāli means “bright” or “shining,” these beings differ from supernatural gods, spirits, angels, and demons in faith-based religions. Devas are not immortal and are subject to death and rebirth, based on their past actions (kamma). Their existence is not dependent on controlling or shaping the physical world, and their knowledge is limited compared to that of an enlightened Buddha. Like humans, the powers of devas are confined to their own world.

Devas (bright ones) are different from supernatural entities like saints and bodhisattvas in Mahayana Buddhism, as they lack the ability to respond to human prayer or meditation. Deva realms vary in moral standing and some experience human-like passions. However, devas are not considered an ultimate refuge and cannot provide an escape from the cycle of rebirth.

¹⁷⁵ How an Unorthodox Scholar Uses Technology to Expose Biblical Forgeries: Smithsonian | <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/how-unorthodox-scholar-uses-technology-expose-biblical-forgeries-180981290/>

¹⁷⁶ “Computers: The key to cracking long-dead languages?” BBC Science | <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20181207-how-ai-could-help-us-with-ancient-languages-like-sumerian>

With regard to the depiction of Bodhisattas as a kind of being beyond human existence, in a divine sense; a comprehensive examination of the Pāli Suttas and Sanskrit Sutras is not necessary to understand their state of being. It is clear that only a human who has attained full self-awakening can become a Buddha,¹⁷⁷ as it is a state of being that distinguishes a Buddha from an Arahant or Bodhisatta. The Arahant and the Bodhisatta are the only two distinctions having the potential to eventually attain the status of a Paccekabuddha.¹⁷⁸ It is within these states of being that separates a Buddha from an Arahant or a Bodhisatta, the latter two of which can destine themselves to become a Paccekabuddha. In connection to this, the records in the Tipitaka and its subsequent commentaries do not depict the states of being, including that of a Buddha, as supernatural or divine entities. Instead, they emphasize that a Bodhisatta is a human being who has not yet reached full enlightenment, as taught by the Buddha in the *Majjhima*, *Aṅguttara*, and *Saṃyutta Nikāyas*.

“Monks, before my awakening, I was yet merely the Bodhisatta [Sanskrit: bodhisattva], not fully-awakened.”

In the same way that a Buddha attains self-awakening (awakening/nibbana), so too follow Arahants (*arahants*), and Bodhisattas. The Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi explains this beautifully.

“...a way to liberation from life's afflictions — and as he tells it, he seeks liberation primarily for himself, not with some grand thought in mind of saving the world. He goes forth, becomes an ascetic, and engages in a relentless struggle for deliverance. Finally, he finds the correct path and attains the bliss of nibbana (Sanskrit-nirvāṇa). After his attainment, he considers whether he should make the path available to others, and his first impulse is to remain silent. Note that he almost follows the route of a paccekabuddha. His major achievement is to have attained nibbana; the state free from all bondage and suffering. This is the great goal, the final end of all spiritual (psychic/mental) striving; the peace beyond all the anxiety and unrest of the ordinary human condition. By teaching the path, he makes this goal available to others, and those who follow the path reach the same goal that he himself attained.”¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ **Becoming a Buddha:** “The Anguttara Nikaya of the Theravada teaches that a Buddha alone has the excellent attributes unique to himself.” | http://www.ahandfulofleaves.org/documents/Articles/TheBodhisattvaIdealofTheravada_JIABS_Ratnayaka_1985.pdf

¹⁷⁸ **Paccekabuddha:** Pāli: पच्चेकबुद्ध Def: “Single, by oneself, separate, one enlightened by himself, i. e. one who has attained to the supreme and perfect insight, but dies without proclaiming their awakening.” Src: https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/Pāli_query.py?qs=pacceka&searchhws=yes

¹⁷⁹ **Bodhisatta/Arahants:** Bodhi, Bhikkhu
<https://accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/bodhi/arahantsbodhisattvas.html>

An examination of the earliest Pāli texts, as well as modern commentaries, reveals that there is no reference to Arahants or Bodhisattas as anything other than humans who have gained exceptional wisdom and knowledge through practice and direct experience. It is common for claims to be made that the mention of "otherworldly" beings in Buddhism is similar to worldview religions, but a close examination of the Pāli texts and their context reveals that there is no exact equivalence. Therefore, using ontological methods, it cannot be concluded that they are the same or equivalent. However, it is important to note that Mahayana Buddhism contains a multitude of supernatural beings, which may explain why a Mahayana sect may view Buddhism as a religion that includes faith-based religious ideas and concepts of supernatural beings.

The Buddha challenged the prevailing beliefs of his society, including moral principles, and created a teaching that relied on reason and compassion instead of tradition, superstition, and taboo. In the renowned Kalama Sutta, he stated that relying on revelation (*anussana*), tradition (*parampara*), scriptural authority (*pitakasampada*), or personal opinions (*ditthinijjhanakkhanti*) alone are insufficient for determining what is correct or incorrect, right or wrong.

Claim #11: Buddhist Scripture: *Buddhists have "scripture" related to the coming of future Buddha's, which is comparable to the scriptures of faith-based religions, which are related to the second coming of Christ.*

Reality Check: Again, here we have an example of anachronism. The baseline meaning of the word "scripture" in the Pali texts compared to the modern conventional meaning is an incorrect expression of the Pali word "Tipitaka." There is no specific Pali word that directly corresponds to the modern conceptual meaning of the word "scripture." The modern word "scripture" did not exist in the Buddha's time. Any Pali reference to the English word "scripture" is a translator's attempts to equate an English word with a Pali word or phrase.

Firstly, while the term "scripture" is often used in the context of organized religions to refer to texts that are believed to have divine or supernatural authority, the Tipitaka is not regarded as a revealed or divinely inspired text in the same way. Rather, it is seen as a collection of teachings that were transmitted by the Buddha and his followers, and later written down and compiled by the early Buddhist community.

Secondly, the Tipitaka differs from many religious scriptures in that it is not presented as a single, unified text or as the sole source of authority for Dhamma teachings. Rather, it is a vast and diverse collection of texts that includes discourses, rules of monastic discipline, and advanced philosophical treatises, among other things.

Thirdly, The Tipitaka is not viewed as infallible or unchanging like some religious texts, but rather a dynamic body of teachings that can be interpreted and adapted across cultures and time periods. While it is often translated as "scripture," it differs from conventional notions of what constitutes scripture.

It must be considered relevant to this claim the fact that the Buddha addressed an issue that is created when translating his teachings into other languages in the *Chulavagga* of the *Vinaya Pitaka*, which is part of the Pali text. According to *Chulavagga* 5.33, the Buddha warned against translating the Tipitaka into Sanskrit, as the musical overtones of Sanskrit made it difficult to convey the true meanings of the *Maghadhi* words in the Pāli language. This is why he admonished two Brahmins, Yamela and Kekuṭṭa, who had become Bhikkhus, asked the Buddha whether they should translate the Dhamma into Sanskrit.

Reductio ad absurdum can be applied to the claim that "Buddhists have 'scripture' related to the coming of future Buddha's, which is comparable to the scriptures of faith-based religions, which are related to the second coming of Christ."

First of all, the claim is an oversimplification of the concepts taught in the Dhamma and faith-based religions, as it compares two vastly different concepts. While it is true that the concept of a future Buddha or Maitreya is present in some Buddhist traditions, it does not hold the same theological significance as the concept of the second coming of Christ in Christianity.

Furthermore, the concept of the future Buddha or Matteyya (Maitreya in Sanskrit) is not universally accepted in all Buddhist schools, and the idea is not central to the teachings of the Buddha. It is also important to note that the texts that mention Matteyya are not considered scripture in the same way that the Bible is considered scripture in Christianity.

The application of *reductio ad absurdum* to this claim highlights the absurdity of comparing the concepts of future Buddhas and the second coming of Christ. It also reveals anachronisms in the modern concept of religion, which often tries to force the Buddha Dhamma into a mold that does not fit with its unique teachings and practices.

The Buddha mentions Matteyya in several Pali texts, including the *Cakkavatti Sihanada Sutta* (Digha Nikaya 26) and the *Metteyya Sutta* (Sutta Nipata 3.9). The *Cakkavatti Sihanada Sutta* describes a future time when the world will be in turmoil and someone bearing the name Matteyya will be born who will teach the Dhamma thus ushering in a new era of Dhamma teachings known as a *Buddha-kalpa*. During the period of time when the teachings of a Buddha are considered to be present and available for practice is called a *buddhasāsana*. This era is said to have begun with the enlightenment of the Buddha and will end when the teachings are forgotten or lost. The *Metteyya Sutta* describes the characteristics and qualities of Matteyya and his future teachings.

The proposition that the second coming of Christ and the future birth of a Buddha called Mattheyya are the same is not an accurate proposition, and it does not support the idea that the teachings of the Buddha constitute a religion. In Christianity, the concept of the second coming of Christ refers to the belief that Jesus Christ will return to Earth in the future, to establish his kingdom and bring an end to the world as we know it.

Again, in the attempt to equate these two disparate concepts, we can identify a gross anachronism. The mention of a future birth of a Buddha, falls in line with the, more or less, common knowledge that there have been many Buddha's who proceeded Siddhartha Gotama, and so it is a logical conjecture that, in time, other Buddha's would also follow him. This was not a prophecy, but a conclusion based on logic of the existence of Buddhas previous to Siddhartha Gotama. Additionally, the concept of a savior-being, like Christ, was unknown during the time of the Buddha. Therefore, it is anachronistic to try and overlay the modern ideas and concept of a prophesied future savior-like entity onto a completely unrelated time or event in history such as ancient Indian culture.

In the Dhamma, Mattheyya refers to a future Buddha who will be born as a human being who will eventually teach the Dhamma and lead sentient beings towards mental awakening, in the same manner as Gotama Buddha. Mattheyya is not depicted in the Pali texts as a savior figure nor as a judge of humanity, such as is Jesus Christ depicted in Christianity. The two figures, although being similar in that each represents someone who leads humanity towards a better future, are not identical concepts or people. One is a humanbeing, the other is a celestial supernatural entity. Each has different roles and functions within their respective purposes. Moreover, the fact that Christianity teaches a belief in a Heavenly savior, and the Dhamma mentions a future Buddha, cannot lend support that the teachings of the Buddha are a religion. Therefore, the proposition that the second coming of Christ and the future birth of Mattheyya are the same is not an accurate proposition, and it does not support the idea that the teachings of the Buddha are a religion. While there may be some similarities between the two concepts, they are not ontologically identical.

This same issue arises with the comparison of the Buddha's teachings as written in the Pali texts to "religious scripture." This comparison is based on a modern understanding of the word "scripture," which did not exist during the Buddha's time. The use of the English word "scripture" is problematic because it implies that the Pāli texts, including the Tipitaka, are inherently religious in nature.

However, this inference is not accurate, and without a proper understanding of the context and meaning of the word "scripture" ignores the essence of the entire Dhamma.

“Scripture” is widely and conventionally recognized as a reference to religious texts, particularly to those contained in the Bible, the Torah and the Quran. Its etymology can be traced back to ancient Roman times,¹⁸⁰ but it was first used with the specific connotation of referring to the sacred writings of the Bible in the 14th century.

The word is derived from the Latin word '*scriptus*,' which means 'to write.'¹⁸¹ In the Pāli Tipitaka, the word *pavacana*¹⁸² is translated to English as "word" or "speech." Specifically, it is used to refer to the words spoken by the Buddha. There is no word contained in the Dhamma that specifically means “scripture,” and although some Pali translators have chosen to equate the word *pavacana* with the word scripture, this is inaccurate.

What distinguishes the teachings of the Buddha, as recorded in the Tipitaka, from the teachings of religious figures from the Holy Bible in Christianity, the Quran of Islam, the Torah of Judaism, and the Avesta of Zoroastrianism? These texts are believed to have been communicated to humanity by a divine supernatural entity. Additionally, the texts contain provisions for punishments and torments if the commandments and decrees of the deity are not obeyed.

A key distinction between the teachings of the Buddha as recorded in the Tipitaka and faith-based religious scriptures is the manner in which they were delivered. While religious scriptures are often revealed through intermediaries, such as prophets, the Buddha's teachings came directly from him. The Buddha's words (*pavacana*) do not prescribe punishment for disobedience or dictate fate based on adherence to the laws and will of a supernatural entity. The Tipitaka clearly states that each individual is responsible for their own actions and their future is shaped by their own choices and actions. Thus, in a literal sense, the Buddha's recorded words (*pavacana*) can be considered scriptura, in line with the *ancient* Latin meaning of the term, which refers to words or writing, but not the modern connotation associated with the modern understanding of the Biblical meaning of the word scripture.

In school, children were once taught a form of handwriting known as cursive, which is a form of script or scriptus. Simply because a writing is in cursive and considered “script” does not automatically make it a religious text. What then constitutes a text religious? One definition of scripture or scriptus is that a religious text is “*writing that is revered for the worship of a deity.*”¹⁸³ This simple definition accurately captures the essence of what constitutes a religious text.

¹⁸⁰ **Scripture etymology:** Borrowed from Latin *scriptūra* (“a writing, scripture”), from *scriptum*, the supine of *scribō* (“I write”). | <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/scripture>

¹⁸¹ **Scripture:** Etymology: *Src:* <https://www.etymonline.com/word/scripture>

¹⁸² *Pavacana* Pāli: पवचन Def: “a word, esp. the word of the Buddha D i,88; S ii,259; Th 1, 587; 2, 457.” https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/Pāli_query.py?qs=p%C4%81vacana&searchhws=yes

¹⁸³ **Religious Text:** *Src:* <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/religious+text>

It is widely accepted that the Buddha was not a deity and his teachings were not revealed through a prophet, which is in stark contrast to the religious texts of many world religions, which are communicated through intermediaries. As a result, the recorded words of the Buddha, known as *pavacana*, cannot be considered religious texts. Given these fundamental differences, it can be concluded that there is no equivalence or similarity between the Buddha's teachings and religious texts.

The Pāli texts at *Digha Nikaya* 26 documents the existence of the human being known as Siddhartha Gotama who attained Buddhahood and the mental state of Nibbana. Buddha mentioned the birth of a Buddha named Matteyya, who will be born at a future time when the Dhamma (the truth about the nature of reality) has become forgotten. In the early first millennium CE, the Mahayanists added more characteristics and more of a story-line to Matteyya, creating a history and specific attributes for him. The Indian scholar Asanga,¹⁸⁴ co-founder of the Yogacara school of Mahayana Buddhism, is particularly associated with these expanded teachings, which were not originally taught by the Buddha. Asanga is known for his teachings on Yogacara, one of the two main schools of Mahayana Buddhism. The essence of his teachings can be summarized as the development of compassion and wisdom through the practice of meditation and mindfulness, which are both taught by the Buddha. Asanga emphasized the importance of understanding the true nature of reality, which is characterized by emptiness and interdependence, which is also taught by the Buddha. However, his teachings regarding cultivating bodhicitta, the aspiration to *attain enlightenment for the benefit of all beings*, was not a concept taught by the Buddha. Despite this, some Mahayanists compare Matteyya to the second coming of Jesus as a way to argue that Buddhism is a religion. However, the Dhamma emphasize that we must rely on our own efforts to attain liberation and that there is no external savior to rely on.

Claim #12: Teaching & Philosophy: *Analysis of the” teachings” and “philosophy” of the Buddha in the Pali texts reveals that Buddhism is in-fact a religion.*

[To simplify this argument, one might simply state: “*The analysis of the Buddha's teachings and philosophy in the Pali texts reveals that Buddhism is a religion.*”]

Reality Check: I assert that the teachings and philosophy of the Buddha definitively classify Buddhism as a religion is grossly flawed. This statement combines two distinct subjects: the Buddha's discourses (*pāvācāna*) and the Buddha's philosophy, which is sometimes referred to as *Buddhāvācāna*. Probably the most cogent differences between the Buddha's philosophy and those of faith-based religions is found within the roots of the philosophies of faith-based religions.

¹⁸⁴ Mahayana Maitreya: Obrien, Barbara | <https://www.learnreligions.com/maitreya-buddha-449794>

For example: Christian philosophy is called Christian Theism. Islamic philosophy is called Islamic Theism. Jewish philosophy is called Jewish Theism or Halakha. All three doctrines focus on the worship supernatural entities. The overall differences between *Buddhavacana* or Dhamma and the philosophy of theism reflect fundamentally different understandings of the nature of reality, the purpose of life, and the role of a divine being or ultimate reality in the universe. While both traditions emphasize ethical behavior and the cultivation of virtues such as compassion and generosity, they differ significantly in their approach to understanding the ultimate truth and achieving liberation from suffering.

Furthermore, to apply *reductio ad absurdum* to the claim that "*Analysis of the teachings*" and "*philosophy*" of the Buddha in the Pali texts reveals that Buddhism is in-fact a religion," one must first ask: what would be the absurd conclusion if this claim were taken to its logical extreme?

If one were to accept this claim, then they would have to accept that what the Buddha taught is a religion in the same sense as the theistic religions mentioned in the text, such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. This would mean that Buddhism would have to have the same fundamental characteristics of theism, such as the worship of supernatural beings or a divine entity, a belief in an afterlife or a higher power, and the use of organized rituals and practices to connect with this entity.

However, as pointed out earlier, the fundamental differences between the philosophy of theism and the philosophy of the Buddha make it impossible to classify his teachings as a religion in the same sense as theism. The Buddha's teachings focus on understanding the nature of reality and the causes of suffering, with the ultimate goal of achieving liberation from this suffering through self-reliance and personal responsibility.

Furthermore, the Buddha rejected the idea of a creator deity and instead emphasized the importance of an individual's own effort and understanding in achieving awakening. This is fundamentally different from theistic religions, which rely on a divine entity to provide guidance, assistance, and ultimately, salvation.

Therefore, the claim is flawed and falls under the scrutiny of *reductio ad absurdum*. If taken to its logical extreme, this claim would lead to the absurd conclusion that Buddhism is a religion in the same sense as the theistic religions, which is not supported by the fundamental differences in philosophy and practice.

- **Concept of God:** In theism, God is typically viewed as a divine being who is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-loving. God is seen as the creator and sustainer of the universe and the source of all moral and ethical principles. In contrast, Buddhism does not posit the existence of a supreme being or creator God. The Buddha taught that the universe operates according to natural laws and that individuals are responsible for their own actions and the consequences that follow.

- **Nature of Reality:** Theism posits a physical world and a spiritual realm with God existing outside the physical world. Buddhism views reality as ever-changing phenomena with no fixed essence. The Buddha taught that liberation is possible through understanding the true nature of reality and the interdependence of phenomena.
- **Purpose of Life:** Theism emphasizes serving God and achieving eternal salvation through following his commandments, while Buddhism aims to end suffering and attain Nirvana by cultivating wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental concentration.
- **Role of Scripture:** Theism sees scripture as the ultimate authority, while the Dhamma is a guide to understanding the Buddha's teachings and for developing wisdom. Buddha stressed personal experience over blind adherence to scripture.

The philosophy of the Buddha serves as the foundation of individual practice and encompasses principles such as the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, dependent origination, the non-self doctrine, and impermanence. Its ultimate objective is to aid individuals in achieving enlightenment, understanding existence, and breaking free from the cycle of rebirth and suffering. Unlike faith-based religions, the philosophy of the Dhamma does not focus on deity worship, but rather accentuates the significance of personal psychological growth and mental liberation through individual understanding and effort. So, the statement that "analysis of the teachings and philosophy of the Buddha reveals that Buddhism is a religion" is problematic and imprecise in its formulation. It is not clearly defined which specific teachings of the Buddha are being referred to, who is carrying out the analysis, and what criteria are being employed in this evaluation.

Moreover, it is questionable whether one could conclusively determine that the Dhamma is a religion solely based on an analysis of its teachings and philosophy. The claim's broad and generalized nature is insufficient to determine its validity, making it difficult to utilize ontology to assess its accuracy. The probability that this claim is based on mere inference is considerably high. It is unlikely that the claimant has thoroughly researched all 84,000 teachings of the Buddha, possesses an in-depth knowledge and contextual understanding of the Pāli language, let alone has had direct personal experience with higher mental achievements known as the jhanas, or a substantial in-depth knowledge of theistic faith-based religions.^{185|186}

¹⁸⁵ Jhana mental states: "A meditative state of profound stillness and concentration in which the mind becomes fully immersed and absorbed in the chosen object of attention. It is the cornerstone in the development of Right Concentration." <https://accesstoinsight.org/ptf/dhamma/sacca/sacca4/samma-samadhi/jhana.html>

¹⁸⁶ Jhanas: *Upanisa Sutta* (SN 12.23): "With the comprehension of suffering (i.e., the First Noble Truth) confidence results; with the growth of faith, lightness of mind (*pāmojjaṃ*) arises; with increasing lightness of mind, joy (*pīti*) arises; with increasing joy, lightness of the body (*passaddhi*) arises; with

That this claim, i.e. "...analysis of the teachings and philosophy of the Buddha reveals that Buddhism is a religion..." is flawed, is due to substantial and unsupported criteria, which is what warrants this generalized claim to be a *fallacy* in philosophy.¹⁸⁷ Fallacies occur when a generalization is based on insufficient evidence, and exist when popular beliefs infer one or both of two competing concepts to be true, even though they are false. Fallacies are deceptive and considered bad arguments. Inductive logic,¹⁸⁸ the process of constructing generalized hypotheses based on direct examples as evidence, requires supporting evidence for the claim to be considered true. However, this generalized statement lacks such evidence, making it a fallacy.

To compare the Buddha's teachings with faith-based religions, a systematic analysis using comparative ontology and deductive logic is necessary. This requires substantial knowledge of both theistic religions and the Dhamma and should involve a multi-disciplinary approach, including philosophical, linguistic, etymological, and heuristic¹⁸⁹ analysis. Claims about the relationship between the Buddha's teachings and religion often lack a systematic approach, relying instead on theoretical hermeneutics.¹⁹⁰

increasing passaddhi, bodily sukha arises; with increasing bodily sukha, samādhi arises; with samādhi, yathābhūtañāṇadassana (knowledge and vision of things as they really are) arises; with the knowledge and vision of things as they really are, one loses attachment to worldly things (nibbida), followed by losing cravings for sense pleasures (viragā), and liberation (vimutti), and to the destruction of all defilements (khayeññam)".

¹⁸⁷ **Fallacies:** Src: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/fallacies/>

¹⁸⁸ **Inductive Logic:** Def: "Inductive logic is a logic of evidential support. In a deductive logic, the premises of a valid deductive argument logically entail the conclusion, where logical entailment means that every logically possible state of affairs that makes the premises true must make the conclusion true as well. Thus, the premises of a valid deductive argument provide total support for the conclusion. An inductive logic extends this idea to weaker arguments. In a good inductive argument, the truth of the premises provides some degree of support for the truth of the conclusion." Src: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/logic-inductive/>

¹⁸⁹ **Heuristics** (Linguistic Heuristic Analysis): Def: "Deriving from the Ancient Greek word meaning "to discover," heuristic analysis is an approach to discovery, learning and problem-solving that uses rules, estimates or educated guesses to find a satisfactory solution to a specific issue." Src:

<https://www.forcepoint.com/cyber-edu/heuristic-analysis> |

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/278675788_Multiple_Correspondence_Analysis_as_heuristic_tool_to_unveil_confounding_variables_in_corpus_linguistics

¹⁹⁰ **Hermeneutics:** Def: "Hermeneutics is the study of interpretation. Hermeneutics plays a role in a number of disciplines whose subject matter demands interpretative approaches, characteristically, because the disciplinary subject matter concerns the meaning of human intentions, beliefs, and actions, or the meaning of human experience as it is preserved in the arts and literature, historical testimony, and other artifacts. Traditionally, disciplines that rely on hermeneutics include theology, especially Biblical studies, jurisprudence, and medicine, as well as some of the human sciences, social sciences, and humanities. For example, in theology, Biblical hermeneutics concerns the general principles for the proper interpretation of the Bible. Src: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hermeneutics/>

The proposition that "*Analysis of the teachings and philosophy of the Buddha in the Pali texts reveals that Buddhism is in-fact a religion*" must consider the following points:

Firstly, the Dhamma does not represent the same message as the holy texts of faith-based religions. While there may be some similarities in terms of moral values and ethical principles, the fundamental differences lie in the focus on personal investigation, direct experience, and the rejection of dogmatic belief. In Buddhism, the emphasis is on individual effort, personal practice, and the cultivation of wisdom and compassion, rather than faith in a deity or external authority.

Secondly, while there may be some similarities between the philosophy represented in the Dhamma and the philosophy of faith-based religions, there are also significant differences. For example, Buddhism emphasizes the impermanence and non-self nature of all phenomena, while many faith-based religions posit the existence of an eternal and unchanging soul or self. Buddhism also rejects the concept of a creator God, as well as the notion of an afterlife in the traditional sense.

Therefore, in order to consider the validity of the proposition that "*Analysis of the teachings and philosophy of the Buddha in the Pali texts reveals that Buddhism is in-fact a religion*" it is important to recognize that there are significant differences between the Dhamma and the texts comprising the doctrines of faith-based religions in terms of their fundamental beliefs, values, and practices. While there may be some similarities, the emphasis on personal investigation, direct experience, and the rejection of dogmatic belief sets Buddhism apart from the philosophy of traditional faith-based religions.

If this type of analytical methodology were used to determine whether the Mahayana Buddhism is indeed a religion, the results would reveal that it is a religion indeed. However, it's important to recognize that in Mahayana Buddhism, some elements of the Buddha's teachings and the philosophy of the Dhamma have been altered, creating a form of Buddhism that resembles more of a faith-based religion.

Claim #13: Buddha Lived Too Long Ago: *Because the Buddha taught so long ago, modern age people have no way of confirming whether or not the Buddha's teachings are even true, regardless of the fact that the Buddha himself said that one should verify his teachings for themselves.*" [A simpler way to present this proposition is: "*Despite the Buddha's instruction to verify his teachings, people of the modern age cannot confirm their truth since he lived so long ago.*"]

Reality Check: When I first read this claim I could not help but chuckle to myself at the utter absurdity that it proposes. The proposition that modern age people have no way of confirming whether or not the Buddha's teachings are true because the Buddha taught so long ago is problematic for several reasons. Mostly, this truth of this claim automatically succumbs to the provisions of *reductio ad absurdum*.

The claim that the teachings of the Buddha cannot be verified in modern times due to the long time elapsed since the Buddha's lifetime is subject to *reductio ad absurdum* because it leads to the absurd conclusion that any ancient teaching or text is inherently unverifiable and therefore not true. This is clearly not a valid argument, as many ancient teachings and texts have been verified and are still considered valuable today.

Furthermore, the claim ignores the fact that the Buddha himself encouraged his followers to verify his teachings for themselves, emphasizing the importance of personal experience and direct insight. This means that the verifiability of the Buddha's teachings does not rely solely on historical evidence, but also on one's own direct experience and understanding.

Therefore, the claim that the Buddha's teachings cannot be verified due to the passage of time is flawed, as it leads to an absurd conclusion and ignores the importance of personal experience in verifying the teachings.

Following are some other problems with this proposition:

First: The proposition assumes that the passage of time alone undermines the truth of the Buddha's teachings. However, the truth of ancient information is not dependent on its age. Likewise, the truth or efficacy of the Buddha's teachings do not depend on their age, but on their validity and applicability to one's own experience and understanding.

Second: The proposition overlooks the fact that the Buddha himself encouraged his followers to investigate his teachings and test them against their own direct experience and reason. The Buddha's teachings are not based on faith or belief in authority, but on personal investigation and direct experience. Therefore, the truth of the Buddha's teachings can be verified through personal practice and realization, regardless of when they were taught.

Third: The proposition assumes that modern age people have no access to the teachings of the Buddha, which is not true. The Buddha's teachings have been preserved in written texts, such as the Pali Canon, and have been translated into multiple languages and made available to people all over the world. Moreover, the essence of the Buddha's teachings can be found in the experience of mindfulness and meditation, which can be practiced by anyone.

Fourth: The proposition also overlooks the fact that the Buddha's teachings are still relevant and applicable in modern times. The problems of suffering, delusion, and attachment that the Buddha addressed are still prevalent in human experience today, and the Buddha's teachings offer practical and effective ways to overcome these problems.

The assertion that "*modern people cannot confirm the truth of the Buddha's teachings*" is flawed and lacks validity. This statement assumes a universal consensus and disregards the validity of historical texts based solely on their age. However, many ancient works by philosophers and mathematicians, such as Euclid, Pythagoras, and Archimedes, to name a few, continue to hold value and relevance through their practical application and trustworthiness. If the concept put forth by this claim is applicable to the Buddha because of the significant expanse of time, then is this also true of the philosophers who are responsible for the entire framework of World culture, ethics and politics? Do we simply throw out all of the wisdom of people such as Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, Robert Paine; or of anyone because they lived *so long ago*? Additionally, what measure of time is "too long ago" anyway? Does such a thing exist in terms of science and philosophy?

The truth of the Buddha's teachings can only be confirmed through personal examination and testing for alignment with reality, rather than through blind acceptance or generalization. This argument relies on inductive reasoning, a process of generalizing from specific details to reach a general conclusion based on probability, rather than certainty. Conclusions are only probably valid if applied correctly.

The saying that one "*can't see the forest for the trees*"¹⁹¹ is a classic idiom that criticizes someone who is overly focused on specific details, unable to grasp the bigger picture. This idiom highlights the idea that a person's perspective can be limited and they may not be able to understand the full scope and context of



something as long as they remain fixated on particular aspects that may or may not be relevant to the overall picture.

In the case of those who claim that the Buddha's teachings represent religion, this idiom applies because when someone becomes too focused on specific elements of the teachings, such as the use of certain terminology or the mention of certain practices, and are therefore missing the larger point of the Buddha's philosophy.

The Buddha's teachings are primarily focused on the attainment of liberation from suffering through the cultivation of wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental concentration. This differs from the focus of many faith-based religions, which emphasize the worship of a supernatural being or beings and the adherence to specific rituals and beliefs. Those who are unable to see this larger perspective are getting caught up in minor details and missing the overall purpose and goal of the Buddha's teachings.

¹⁹¹ **Can't see the forest for the trees.** *Idiom Def:* "Cannot see, understand, or focus on a situation in its entirety due to being preoccupied with minor details."

Inaccurate, incomplete information, wrong beliefs, or just plain ignorance, contributes to misinformation and misunderstandings, which was very much the case surrounding the recent Corona Virus pandemic. Certain individuals who concentrated on a singular aspect of COVID, believe that the virus is a recent development. However, they are unaware that the COVID virus was first identified in 1933 by a group of scientists led by virologist June Almeida¹⁹² in the United Kingdom. The virus was named "coronavirus" due to its crown-like appearance under a microscope. But, while you are in the forest, all you can see are trees.

This kind of limited ‘*can’t see the forest for the trees*’ thinking also exemplifies the idea of stereotyping, which is a form of inductive reasoning. Although stereotyping is a type of inductive thinking, it is a flawed and incorrect application of the generalization process. Stereotyping occurs due to its ease and convenience, and it may appear logical, but it never results in a valid conclusion. A stereotype of Buddhism is formed by hastily and ignorantly assuming that the characteristics of a single part of the Buddha’s teachings apply to the entire philosophy.

A part of this proposition suggests one cannot verify the Buddha's teachings for themselves despite the Buddha's encouragement to do so, disregards the essence of the Dhamma and misinterprets the Buddha's intent. This sweeping generalization wrongly assumes that a requirement for following the teachings of the Buddha, is blind faith in the same manner and meaning as meaning of members of theistic faith-based religions. The Buddha's instruction to not blindly accept his teachings should not be interpreted as requiring faith without understanding. In this regard, the Buddha’s words to the Kalama peoples is apropos:

*“Don't go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by writings, by logical conjecture, by inference, by analogies, by agreement through pondering views, by probability, or by the thought, "This contemplative is our teacher." When you know for yourselves that, "These qualities are skillful; these qualities are blameless; these qualities are praised by the wise; these qualities, when adopted and carried out, lead to welfare and to happiness" — then you should enter and remain in them.' Thus, was it said.”*¹⁹³

The notion that the Buddha's teachings cannot be verified is invalid, as he emphasized personal experience and understanding. The truth of his teachings is validated through direct application and practice, not blind faith. This contrasts with theistic faiths that require faith in supernatural beings without empirical evidence. It should be clear that the Buddha's initial statement doesn’t imply blind faith.

¹⁹² Almeida, June: Discoverer of Coronavirus:

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/june-almeida-discovered-coronaviruses-decades-ago-little-recognition>

¹⁹³ Kalama Sutta: AN 3.61: <https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/an/an03/an03.065.than.html>

Philological & Linguistic Considerations

Before moving on, I would like to insert this section on philology.¹⁹⁴ The study of philology applied to the various forms of Buddhism provides a deeper understanding of the language, literature, and texts of the Tipitaka. This exploration sheds light on how some of the Buddha's teachings have evolved over time through the influence of cultural adaptations and the invention of different forms of Buddhism. By doing so, readers can appreciate that the results of my analysis were not based on mere personal opinions about what the Dhamma teaches. Philology is a field of study concerned with language, literature, and texts. When the science of philology is applied to the context of the Dhamma, one can utilize it in various ways to gain a more profound understanding of the Buddha's teachings. Some of these ways include:

1. **Historical Linguistics:** This part of philology examines the historical development of the Pali texts, and the evolution of Pali terminology and language over time.
2. **Textual Criticism:** Analyzing the authenticity, accuracy, and reliability of Pali texts, and comparing different versions of texts to determine their original form.
3. **Cultural and Literary Analysis:** Examining the cultural context and literary style of Pali texts, and exploring how the Buddha's teachings were transmitted and adapted in different regions and cultures throughout time.
4. **Comparative Analysis:** Comparing Pali texts with other religious texts, such as the Vedas, the Upanishads, and the Bhagavad Gita, to gain a deeper understanding of the Buddha Dhamma and its relationship with other religious traditions.

It would be unwise to overlook the issue of interpolations in the Pali texts. Interpolations refer to the intentional act of someone other than the original author who adds, alters, or inserts language into ancient texts. Many interpolations can be traced back to specific writers. The problem of interpolations is not unique to Buddhism. Interpolations in the New Testament Bible bear a striking resemblance to the writing style, grammar, and linguistics of several ancient Roman writers, including Pliny the Younger, Suetonius, and possibly Plutarch. These individuals lived during the time when the New Testament was written, and linguists suspect them of having created and written several books, if not all, of the New Testament.

194 Philology: Def: "The study of language in oral and written historical sources; it is the intersection of textual criticism, literary criticism, history, and linguistics (with especially strong ties to etymology).[1][2][3] Philology is more commonly defined as the study of literary texts as well as oral and written records, the establishment of their authenticity and their original form, and the determination of their meaning. A person who pursues this kind of study is known as a philologist." Src: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philology>

Of the ancient writers who linguists believe actually wrote some of the New Testament, the following four are highly probable candidates:

Plutarch: Plutarch was a Greek historian, biographer, and essayist who lived in the 1st and 2nd centuries CE. His works were widely read and influential in the ancient world, and some scholars have noted that his writing style are seen in certain parts of the New Testament.

Philo of Alexandria: Philo was a Jewish philosopher who lived in the 1st century CE. He wrote extensively about Jewish history, religion, and ethics, and some scholars have shown that his ideas and linguistic style not only appear in the New Testament, but that his ideas influenced the development of Christianity.

Josephus: Josephus was a Jewish historian who lived in the 1st century CE. He wrote several works about Jewish history and the Jewish-Roman War, and scholars believe there is evidence that he also contributed to the New Testament.

Seneca the Younger: Seneca was a Roman philosopher and playwright who lived in the 1st century CE. His writing style and ideas have been associated with those found in the New Testament. He his ideas are thought to have influenced the development of early Christianity.

Inconsistencies and interpolations are rampant throughout various translations of the Christian Bible, despite the lofty claim that it represents the word of God. From one version to another, numerous discrepancies exist, casting doubt upon the validity of this supposedly sacred text. The Septuagint, written in Greek, contains vast differences from the modern Bible, further contributing to the confusion. Forensic philologists have turned their attention to these ancient biblical texts in recent years, delving into their content, context, grammar, and etymology to uncover the truth behind their creation. What they have found is shocking – the New Testament, in particular, is riddled with interpolations.¹⁹⁵ Recent works have even gone so far as to suggest that the wealthy Roman Piso family directed and funded the creation of the New Testament under the watchful eye of Roman Emperors Vespasian and Titus.

To fully understand the authenticity and evolution of the Buddha's teachings, one must carefully consider the possibility of later historical interpolations and their potential impact on the Pali texts in the same manner as writers have contributed to the creation of the Bible's New Testament.

¹⁹⁵ Interpolation (Specifically related to Judeo-Christianity):

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interpolation_\(manuscripts\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interpolation_(manuscripts)) |

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20111010102426482> |

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_interpolation |

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josephus_on_Jesus#The_Testimonium_Flavianum |

https://rationalwiki.org/wiki/Bible_interpolation

Modern sciences, such as archaeology, forensic philology, and etymology have all been employed in determining the authenticity of ancient texts, in many instances providing concrete evidence as to their origin.^{196|197|198|199|200} Forensic linguistic sciences are the application of linguistic knowledge, methods, and insights to legal cases and investigations. This field involves the analysis of language use in order to establish authorship, authenticity, and meaning in a variety of contexts. Forensic linguists may be called upon to analyze the language used in legal documents, contracts, and other written materials, as well as in speech, recordings, and other forms of communication. They may also use linguistic analysis to determine the origin of a text or the identity of a speaker, and to detect instances of fraud or deception in language use. The field of forensic linguistics encompasses a wide range of sub-disciplines, including forensic phonetics, forensic stylistics, forensic discourse analysis, and others.

Forensic philology is a field of study that combines linguistic and historical methods to analyze and interpret ancient texts and documents. In forensic philology, scholars use a variety of techniques to determine the authenticity, authorship, and date of a particular text, as well as its historical context and significance.

One of the key techniques used in forensic philology is textual criticism, which involves analyzing the textual variants and inconsistencies in a manuscript or document in order to reconstruct its original form and meaning. This can involve comparing different versions of a text, examining the language and writing style, and identifying any anomalies or errors that may have occurred during the copying or transmission of the text identifying if something in the text represents an interpolation.

Another important method used in forensic philology is paleography, which involves the study of ancient handwriting and writing materials. By analyzing the shape, size, and other characteristics of letters and symbols in a text, paleographers can determine the likely time and place of its production, as well as the identity of the scribe who wrote it.

Forensic philologists may also use linguistic and historical contextualization to help identify the authorship or origin of a text. By comparing the language and style of a text to other works of literature from the same period, scholars can often identify common features or themes that suggest a particular author or cultural context.

196 Creating Christ: Valliant, James S., <https://www.creatingchrist.com/> | <https://youtu.be/aSixd9IP9X4> | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilF5NIZnoq4>

197 Creating Christianity: Davis, Henry, <https://www.henryhdavis.com/book>

198 Operation Messiah: Voskuilen, Thijs, Sheldon, Rose Mary, PhD
<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/7634081-operation-messiah>

199 Out of Egypt: The Roots of Christianity: Osman, Ahmed,
<http://www.domainofman.com/ankhemmaat/osman.html>

200 Caesar's Messiah: Atwill, Joseph, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caesar%27s_Messiah

Over the last one-hundred years, a main area of study in forensic philology is related to the later Bible texts where the authorship is questionable. Many books of the Bible are attributed to specific authors, such as Moses, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Paul, but forensic philologists have found evidence suggesting that these attributions are incorrect. Forensic philological analysis, for example, has been used to argue that different sections of the Bible were written by authors other than those who are claimed to be the authors, or that some sections were added or modified at much later dates than the earlier dates they are claimed to have been written.

Forensic philologists have also sought to determine the historical events and customs referenced in the Bible. By examining the language used to describe the construction of the Ark of the Covenant or the names and titles of individuals mentioned in the Bible, scholars have gained insights into the political and social context in which the text was written.

The application of forensic philology to biblical texts has led to a better understanding of their origins. Through rigorous analysis and historical context, scholars have clarified the dates and times in which the ancient texts were purportedly written and determined the existence of various persons identified in the Bible. After nearly a century of effort, forensic philologists have gained new insights into the beliefs, customs, and practices of the ancient societies that produced these texts.

It is intriguing to note that the investigations conducted by forensic philologists within the last twenty-five years, reveal that modern Pāli texts maintain the same fundamental ideas as the earliest texts dating back to between 250 BCE to 1 BCE. Evidence for this consistency can be seen within the Gandhāran texts discovered in Afghanistan in 1994,²⁰¹ (*see image next page*). Although some terms in these texts are written in other ancient languages, forensic philological analysis has confirmed that the significance and context of the ancient texts has remained unaltered when compared to modern-day Pāli texts. The only exceptions being with some texts composed in Sanskrit, where the interpretation uses inaccurate Sanskrit concepts and terminology to describe the ancient Pāli concepts taught by the Buddha.²⁰²

With regard to the Sanskrit language, many concepts taught by the Buddha take on a different meaning when certain Pāli words are translated into Sanskrit, which is the predominant language of the Mahayana Tripitaka.

²⁰¹ **Gandhāran Buddhist texts:**

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1O3GVZ3s3sXwnzeRQpVxixDPOnxdXZ7NM/viewen.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gandh%C4%81ran_Buddhist_texts |

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1O3GVZ3s3sXwnzeRQpVxixDPOnxdXZ7NM/view>

²⁰² Buddha prohibited the translation of the Dhamma into other languages, particularly Sanskrit:

<https://puredhamma.net/forums/topic/sanskrit-prohibited/?highlight=sanskrit>



Ghandaharan Texts Discovered in Afganistan in 1994

Religion scholar Barbara O'Brien²⁰³ who favors the Mahayana form of Buddhism states:

"It should be remembered that Buddhism is not a "revealed" religion — meaning it's scriptures are not assumed to be the revealed wisdom of a God. Buddhists are not sworn to accept every word as literal truth. Instead, we rely on our own insight, and the insight of our teachers, to interpret these early texts."

What is Real?



It is historically and etymologically accurate to state that the origin of the English word "real" is derived from the Latin word "res"²⁰⁴, and this translation also coincides with the concept that "res" is a "thing." However, the word "thing" is often used in ontological discourse without requiring an explicit philosophical definition because it belongs to ordinary language, but this is a matter of debate. While it is true that the word "thing" is commonly used in everyday language and has a broad, general meaning, its use in philosophical discourse, particularly in ontology, often requires a more precise definition and clarification. This is because in ontology, the word "thing" is used to refer to the nature of existence and the relationship between objects, concepts, and reality, which requires a deeper understanding and examination.

²⁰³ **Barbara O'Brien:** <https://www.learnreligions.com/barbara-o-brien-449479>

²⁰⁴ **Res Latin-Meaning:** <http://latindictionary.wikidot.com/noun:res>

The Latin word "*res*" is a noun that means "thing" or "matter." It can refer to any object or concept that exists in the world. On the other hand, the Pali word "*tatha*" is an adverb that means "in that way." It is often used in a philosophical context, particularly in Buddhism, to refer to the way things truly are, or the nature of reality. So while "*res*" refers to concrete objects or ideas, "*tatha*" refers more to a way of understanding or perceiving reality. The two words are quite different in their meaning and usage, and come from very different linguistic and cultural contexts. In essence then, it is wholly inappropriate to use the English word "real," which derives from the Latin root "*res*" with the Pali word "*tatha*."

The Buddha advised against accepting beliefs based on unreliable sources such as hearsay, legends, traditions, written works, logical assumptions, inferences, comparisons, consensus, or probabilities. This implies that there is no evidence to support the idea that the teaching of the Buddha is a religion in the conventional sense. Again, as was mentioned earlier, use of the term "*scripture*" in the Kalama Sutta is the translator's convenience, and does not wholly reflect the actual word Tipitaka that is actually used, therefore the word English "scripture" is not reflective of the Buddha's intended meaning. Neither does the modern concept of "*scripture*" align with the original intention of the Pāli words "*pavacana*" or "*pavacati*," which mean to proclaim or announce. When we compare the language used by the Buddha to the modern-day English language, especially those used by faith-based religions, we often impose wrong meanings and interpretations onto the Dhamma. This is because several words utilized in the Dhamma do not align with the contemporary word meanings and concepts.

Categorizing the Dhamma or the Buddha as a religion based on common language is obviously flawed, and is anachronistic itself. Buddhism cannot be considered as a categorical "thing" in the same way that the word religion implies a certain "thing." This is also true of categorizing the Pali word Tipitaka with the English word "scripture." Using such a label without a clear philosophical, ontological, or philological definition oversimplifies the teachings of the Dhamma and ignores the role of direct experience.

In general, when the Buddha refers to the "nature of reality," here the Buddha is referring to the state of everything as it exists as a whole, regardless of human perception or interpretation. The nature of reality is a central topic of the Dhamma, and it is often referred to as "ultimate reality" or "ultimate truth".

According to the Buddha's teachings, ultimate reality is understood to be the impermanence and interdependence of all things, which is often referred to as "dependent origination." This means that all phenomena arise in dependence upon other phenomena and is subject to constant change. This is a central theme of the Buddha's teachings representing the characteristic nature of everything. It means that everything that exists in the world, including all physical and mental phenomena, arises and changes based on the interaction and interdependence of other phenomena.

Nothing exists in isolation or as a permanent and unchanging entity, as is taught in the Dhamma, but is instead subject to constant change and dependent on other factors for its existence. This idea is expressed in the Dhamma as "*dependent origination*" (*Paṭicca Samuppāda*) and is central to the understanding of impermanence and the nature of reality. In Dhamma philosophy, the ultimate nature of reality is said to be beyond words and concepts, and can only be experienced directly through meditation, knowledge and the cultivation of wisdom. The Buddha taught that by understanding the true nature of reality, one opens the door to the possibility of liberation from the cycle of suffering.

As was earlier mentioned, the Pali word most commonly translated as "real" is "*tatha*." However, this word is not meant to convey the meaning that something exists and is therefore real. *Tatha* is used to convey the idea of *something that is genuine, true, or authentic*. In the context of the Dhamma, the term "*tatha*" refers to the ultimate nature of reality, which is seen as unchanging, eternal, and beyond the realm of ordinary experience. It is also used in the Four Noble Truths to describe the way things really are, beyond the illusions and delusions of ordinary experience.

Objectively, whether something is "real" *in the conventional sense*, is still subject to change and is reliant on one's own subjective views. Therefore, the definition of "real" can vary depending on the context and perspective. In general, the concept of "*tatha*" refers to something that exists objectively and independently of perception or interpretation. For example, physical objects and natural phenomena, such as the sun and the moon, are considered real because they can be observed and measured in a consistent and verifiable way over time.

In philosophy, there are different theories about what can be considered real, such as metaphysical realism, which posits that external objects have an objective and independent existence, and idealism, which holds that reality is only a mental construct. In the end, what is considered real depends on one's beliefs, assumptions, and perspective, as well as the methods and criteria used to determine what constitutes reality.

Etymology

Taking a Deeper Look into the Consequences of the Meaning of the Word "Religion"

Although this topic was discussed earlier, I felt that a deeper exploration into the reasons for the origin and meaning of the word "religion" should be examined further. Taking into consideration, not only the relatively short etymological history of the English word 'religion' itself, it is logical to conclude that the concepts of what the current word 'religion' means raises serious implications regarding the non-existence of the word during the time of the Buddha. The application of modern concepts and ideas, meanings, and practices should not be applied to the concepts and ideas in ancient times. What may be common or conventional in modern terms, may have been, and frequently is, the opposite or non-existent in ancient times.

The first recorded use of the English word "religion" dates back to the 14th century. The word is derived from the Latin word "*religionem*" which means "*respect for what is sacred*;" reverence for the gods, sense of right or moral obligation." The word, in its modern conventional usage, refers to a specific system of beliefs and practices concerning the worship of a deity or deities, which developed around the 16th century. The concept of religion as it is understood today is a product of Western thought and has evolved over time to encompass a wide range of beliefs and practices. These linguistic developments began some 1,600 years after the Buddha's death. On what basis can anyone make the claim that what the Buddha taught equates to the modern-day meaning and concept of "religion?"

The claim that the Buddha's teachings equate to the modern-day concept of religion is baseless and unfounded. The very notion of religion as it is understood today is a product of Western thought and developed around the 16th century, long after the Buddha's death. To impose this modern framework onto the teachings of the Buddha is not only inaccurate but also disrespectful to the rich history and diversity of the Dhamma. The Buddha's teachings were not concerned with the worship of deities or the adherence to a specific set of beliefs and practices, but rather with the attainment of personal liberation from suffering through the development of wisdom and compassion. To reduce this profound philosophy to a mere religious doctrine is to miss the true essence of the Buddha's teachings and to perpetuate Western-centric views. It is time to acknowledge and respect the distinctiveness of the Buddha's teachings and to appreciate them on their own terms, rather than forcing them into a Western mold.

Consider this: Prior to the time of the Roman Empire, the concept of "religion" simply did not exist. In ancient cultures, the concept of religion as a separate, distinct aspect of life did not exist. Instead, various mythical and supernatural beliefs and practices were deeply integrated into daily life and culture. As a result, it can be challenging to find an equivalent term conveying the concept of "religion" in many ancient societies. Some ancient cultures did have words or phrases that referred to certain aspects of worship of various gods, but not a word encompassing the concept of religion. For example, in ancient Greece, the term "threskeia" (θρησκεία) and "eusebeia" (εὐσέβεια) were used to describe certain practices, piety, or reverence for the gods. These terms, however, did not encompass the entirety of the concept of religion as we understand it today.

In ancient India, prior to the time of the Buddha, the Sanskrit word "dharma" meant "duty," "virtue," "morality," or "natural law." While not an exact equivalent to the modern concept of religion, it does convey a sense of the interconnectedness of ethical, and social duties.

In ancient Mesopotamia, various devotional activities were a central part of daily life, but there was no specific term for "religion" as a separate concept. Instead, the Sumerian word "me" (pronounced "may") referred to a set of divine rules or powers that governed various aspects of life, including social norms, moral values, and sacrifices to the gods.

Probably the oldest known culture on Earth is that of the ancient Egyptians or “Kemetians” as they originally referred to themselves. Going back some 5,000 years, the ancient Egyptians did not have a direct hieroglyph or word for “religion” as we understand it today, they had a complex belief system that encompassed various gods, goddesses, rituals, and practices. The concept of religion as a separate, distinct aspect of life was not prevalent in ancient Egypt.

Egyptians recognized a polytheistic pantheon of various anthropomorphic agents, each having a specific role in the cause and effect of nature. Each anthropomorphized entity had unique roles and responsibilities. Some of the most important deities in ancient Egypt were Ra, the sun god; Osiris, the god of the afterlife; Isis, the goddess of motherhood and magic; and Horus, the god of the sky.

The ancient Egyptian language, written in hieroglyphs, contained words for individual gods, rituals, and various sacrificial concepts, but not an overarching term for “religion” itself. While some ancient cultures had words or phrases that referred to aspects of duties performed for each god or goddess, there was never a clear equivalent to our modern concept of “religion” in many societies prior to the Roman Empire. It is from the Roman Empire that not only the word, but the concept of “religion” was born.

The first recorded conceptual use of the word “religion” comes from ancient Rome. At the end of the 4th Century (380-400 CE), the Roman grammarian Sirvius, quoted the Roman philosopher/poet Lucretius: [*“Religio, id est metus ab eo quod mentem religet, dicta religio”*] (English translation: “Religion, that is, fear from that which binds the mind, is called religion”). This definition of “religion” was first said by Lucretius (96-55 BCE) along with “*religionum animum nodis exsolvere*,” (English translation: “To untie the knots of the mind in matters of religion” or “to free the mind from the bonds of religion.” This translation conveys the idea of liberating one’s mind from the constraints or limitations imposed by religious beliefs or dogma. This shows that Lucretius considered *ligare* (to bind) to be the root of the Latin word *religio*. In Cicero’s *De Natura Deorum* (On the Nature of the Gods), he derives *religio* from *relegere*, as meaning to ‘go through or over again’ with regards to the acts of reading, speech or thought [*“Qui omnia quae ad cultum deorum pertinerent diligenter pertractarent, et tamquam relegerent, sunt dicti religiosi ex relegendo, ut elegantes ex eligendo”*].

I find Cicero’s early definition of “religion” above of *religio* and *religere*, to be quite revealing (Note: The English translation of Cicero’s quote is provided below). It is clear that even in this early time in history, Cicero equates religion with fear and a consequential binding and tying the mind in knots.

English translation: “Religion, that is, the fear arising from a sense of obligation, which binds the mind, is called ‘religion’ because it restrains and ties the mind with knots. Those who carefully studied all matters related to the worship of the gods and, as it were, selected them, were called ‘religious’ from ‘relegere’ (to select), just as those who are chosen are called ‘elegant’ from ‘eligere’ (to choose).”

Largely, our present modern concept of religion is based mostly on the concepts defined by Cicero and Lucretius. These two persons are the most influential people responsible for the modern conceptual meaning of the word religion. I find that Cicero's definition of religion most succinctly and blithely explains what religion was considered during his time: "*Religion, that is, the fear arising from a sense of obligation, which binds the mind, is called 'religion' because it restrains and ties the mind with knots.*" I can personally attest, from my own direct experience, to the accuracy of Cicero's observation.

I find the modern concept of "religion" to be closer to Cicero's definition than to Lucretius'. Cicero's definition of religion as a system of beliefs and practices based on fear and obligation to the gods has had a lasting impact on Western thought and has influenced the development of the modern concept of religion. The idea of religion as a set of beliefs and practices that involves a relationship with a supernatural power or powers, often involving ritual practices, is a central aspect of the modern meaning of religion.

Lucretius, on the other hand, was a Roman philosopher who rejected the traditional Roman religious beliefs and practices of his time. He advocated for a more rational and scientific understanding of the world, based on the principles of Epicurean philosophy²⁰⁵. Lucretius believed that religion was based on superstition and fear, and that a more rational and empirical approach to understanding the world could lead to greater happiness and well-being. It could be said that Lucretius' views more closely mirrored those of the Buddha, while Cicero's ideas most closely align with the concept of modern faith-based theological religions.

While Lucretius' views have had some influence on modern thought, particularly in the areas of science and philosophy, they have not had the same lasting impact on the development of the modern concept of religion as Cicero's definition. The modern understanding of religion is still largely based on the traditional Western faith-based religious doctrine, which are heavily influenced by Cicero's and Lucretius' ideas.

Comparing Cicero's definition of religion, which is responsible for the modern conceptual meaning of "religion," with the Buddha's teachings we find stark differences. Cicero's concept of religion emphasizes the fear arising from a sense of obligation, which binds the mind and restrains it with knots. He suggests that those who carefully study all matters related to the worship of the gods, electing to believe them, are considered "religious" as they are bound by their fear and sense of obligation. Cicero's view of religion is rooted in the ancient Roman traditional understanding of religious practices, which are centered around appeasing and pleasing the gods to avoid their wrath and punishment. In contrast, the teachings contained in the Dhamma emphasize a path of understanding and compassion.

²⁰⁵ Epicurean Philosophy: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epicureanism#Philosophy>

Throughout the Middle Ages, the words *religio*, *religere*, *religion* and *religious*, meant “observant, conscientious, and *stringent*,” all of which are echoed in Cicero’s definition. During the mid to late 16th century, the word religion began to evolve in conjunction with the rites and ceremonies involved in the worship of a god or other supernatural beings, such as angels and demons.

Additional development of the word began toward the end of the Middle Ages, lasting through the beginning of the 17th century. The meaning of the word began to refer to strict observance of theological law and conscience, heed of duty, involving painstaking scrupulosity. From Cicero’s time up to today, the connotation places emphasis on the word *religio* and the concept of *relegere*-centered obligation, e.g. *domum religione obligare* (“to dedicate a house to religious purposes” -Cicero).

The modern-day concept that ‘religion’ means an “*action or conduct indicating a belief in a divine power and reverence for and desire to please it*,” comes from the Anglo-French (*religiun*, *religion*, *religion*). Whereas, the meaning of “*piety, devotion; religious community*,” comes directly from Latin *religionem* (nominative *religio*), which was extended to mean “*respect for what is sacred, reverence for the gods; fear of the gods; divine service, religious observance; a religion, a faith, a mode of worship, cult; sanctity, holiness*.”²⁰⁶ We see, not only the history of the word religion, but we can also see the historical changes in concept and contextual meaning.

Cicero’s amalgamation of the idea that “fear” is an element of religion, I find to be a true application, in that my direct experiences with the various denominations of Christianity proves this out. The role of fear in the Abrahamic religions is nothing short of a primitive and barbaric tool of religious oppression. It is a means of subjugating people and keeping them in line through the constant threat of eternal damnation and divine punishment. The concept of divine judgment is used to control and manipulate believers, to force them into subservience to a deity that demands nothing less than complete obedience and submission. However, the rules of subservience were always created by human beings, not gods, which is the conduit by which the faith-based religions have maintained a stranglehold on believers.

In the Abrahamic religions, fear is not a natural response to the power and authority of God, but a calculated and intentional means of enforcing religious dogma and conformity. Religion is a tool used by religious leaders to suppress dissent and punish those who dare to question the authority of the clergy or deviate from the prescribed religious orthodoxy they invent.

In the faith-based religions, love and compassion, the very virtues that should form the bedrock of any spiritual journey, are secondary to fear and the threat of punishment. The complexity and beauty of the human experience are reduced to a crude and primitive binary of reward and punishment, where fear is the primary motivator and love is an afterthought.

206 Religion, Etymology- <https://www.etymonline.com/word/Religion>

The use of fear in the faith-based religions is a betrayal of the very essence of spirituality, an affront to human dignity, and a barrier to the full expression of human potential. It is time to reject the primitive and oppressive role of fear in religion and embrace a more enlightened, compassionate, and rational approach to the human condition that respects the dignity and autonomy of every human being.

Concept of Religion in the Buddha's Time

Advocates of the idea that the Buddha's teachings are a religion argue that the concept of religion did not exist during the Buddha's time, hence he could not have had any understanding of it, is contracted reasoning. Via the long-arm extension of modern reasoning, they believe that this is not a deterrent from affixing the modern concept of religion onto the past. However, this argument is based on the fact that the Latin word "religion" did not exist then and therefore, the Buddha was unaware of it. This is a weak argument as the faith-based religions also did not exist during the Buddha's time. While the modern conventional meaning of the word "religion" did not exist in the Buddha's time, the word itself did not exist, the concept behind the word "religion" was certainly understood by the Buddha. This is another case of gross anachronism, i.e. that of superimposing modern concepts onto an ancient teaching.

This argument is not only a gross misinterpretation of the Buddha's philosophy, but is based on weak and unsubstantiated claims. When someone twists the facts to suit their own point of view, it is referred to as "spin" or "bias." In more severe cases, it can be called "misrepresentation," "distortion," or "manipulation." These terms describe the act of presenting information in a way that favors a particular perspective, often to the detriment of the truth or accuracy of the facts.

It is misleading to suggest that the concept behind the word "religion" was not understood by the Buddha. While it is true that the modern conventional meaning of the word did not exist during the Buddha's time, the concept behind the word was vastly different from what it is today. The modern-day concept of "religion" as a separate and distinct aspect of life, with its own set of beliefs, practices, and institutions, did not exist during the historical time of the Buddha (circa 5th century BCE). However, religious and spiritual beliefs and practices were present and deeply integrated into daily life and culture.

In the Indian subcontinent during the time of the Buddha, several religious and philosophical systems existed. The predominant religious tradition was Vedic Brahmanism, which later evolved into Hinduism. The Vedic tradition emphasized ritualistic practices, the caste system, and the authority of the Brahmin priests. Alongside this, there were other philosophical systems and schools of thought, such as Jainism and the various Śramaṇa movements, which often challenged and criticized the Brahmin orthodoxy.

The Buddha's teachings emerged within this context. He was a contemporary of Mahavira, the 24th and the last Tirthankara of Jainism. The Buddha's teachings focused on the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, and the concept of dependent origination, offering a practical path to enlightenment and release from suffering. From the earliest Pali texts there is significant evidence that the Buddha's intentions were not to create or form a new religion, but quite the reverse. His efforts clearly reveal his intention to separate his teachings from the trappings of religion.

The claim that the faith-based religions did not exist during the Buddha's time is a red herring. The absence of modern-day religions does not in any way suggest that the Buddha's teachings were themselves a religion. This argument is nothing more than a desperate attempt to superimpose a modern concept onto an ancient philosophy. The notion that the Buddha's teachings can be equated to a religion is a fallacy based on weak and unfounded arguments. It is time to move beyond these anachronistic interpretations and appreciate the Buddha's philosophy on its own terms, as a profound and timeless exploration of the human condition.

Comparing the original teachings of the Buddha to theistic faith-based systems is flawed in-and-of-itself due to the lack of existence of certain socio-political, cultural, linguistic, and philosophical concepts during the Buddha's time. Therefore, such comparisons lack ontological validity and are theoretical at best. For instance, comparing the Buddha's attitude towards women to modern women's rights is inappropriate and anachronistic. The use of the word "religion" in common language often associates it with supernatural elements central to faith-based systems.²⁰⁷

The historical context in the time which the Buddha lived, as described in the Pāli texts, makes it abundantly clear that he was well aware of the various belief systems that existed, including those of the Brahmins, the Shramanas, the Ajivikas, the Lokayatas, and the Agonistics. Rather, the Buddha's teachings were a response to the complex spiritual traditions that existed during his time. He rejected blind faith and emphasized cultivating wisdom and compassion through direct experience. If alive today, he would likely reject modern religious belief systems that involve the existence of a supernatural being and blind adherence to dogma. The Buddha's teachings are a critique of the very notion of religion, as he did not seek to create a new religion or impose specific beliefs and practices on his followers. Instead, he encouraged questioning, exploration, and finding one's own path to liberation from suffering. His philosophy transcends the limitations of any particular belief system or religion.

207 Non-sequitur: Def: "1. An inference that does not follow from the premises specifically: A fallacy resulting from a simple conversion of a universal affirmative proposition or from the transposition of a condition and its consequent 2: A statement (such as a response) that does not follow logically from or is not clearly related to anything previously said Src: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/non%20sequitur>

Modern translators of the Pali texts cite the word *samaya* and associate it with the modern-day conventional concept of the meaning of the word *religion*.²⁰⁸ The Pali phrase *samaya ditthi* encompasses the meaning of a system of beliefs, and refers to the 'doctrine of outsiders (*parabbāsā*),' specifically where *ditthi* means 'belief.' Depending on the context, the Pali word "ditthi" mean "view," "perspective," or "belief." In Dhamma philosophy, the word *micchāditthi* (me-che-cha dee-thee) refers to a false, misguided, or ignorant view of reality that leads to suffering. The term is often used in the context of the Four Noble Truths, where it is explained that ignorance and wrong views are the root cause of suffering. The Buddha taught that freeing oneself from wrong views and attaining right understanding was necessary for the attainment of liberation and enlightenment.

The Pali phrase *ditthi-nijjhāna* (dit-thee nee-jhaa-naa) refers to one's attachments to "fixed views." In the Dhamma, *atthakkhāya-ditthi* (at-tha-khaa-yaah deet-thee) refers to the belief in a permanent, unchanging self or essence. This belief, according to the Buddha, is considered to be the key source of suffering and ignorance, as it leads to attachment and aversion, and blocks the understanding of the impermanence and interdependence of all things. Clearly grasping the meaning of both the phrases *ditthi-nijjhāna* and *atthakkhāya-ditthi* is considered to be an essential step towards achieving a stage of awakening to the reality of the nature of existence. Therefore, even though the word 'religion' did not exist in the Buddha's time, the Buddha's use of the phrase *atthakkhāya-ditthi* demonstrates his clear understanding of the beliefs and practices of those outside of the Dhamma.

The non-existence of the word religion in the Buddha's time does not mean that the Buddha was unaware of the conventional concepts attached to its present-day meaning. The comparison is not with the word itself, but with the values and concepts associated with its current conventional definition. The existence of the phrase "*samaya ditthi*" suggests that the Buddha was aware of the concept.

Before his awakening, the Buddha, known then as Siddhartha Gotama, studied with two teachers, Alara Kalama²⁰⁹ and Uddaka Ramaputta,²¹⁰ who were from the

²⁰⁸ Samaya: "A group as follows: 1. coming together, gathering; a crowd, multitude Dhammapada i.178 ('pavāda debating hall')." https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/pali_query.py?page=684

²⁰⁹ **Alara Kalama:** "After Siddhartha Gautama became an ascetic, he went to Alara Kalama, who was a teacher that taught a kind of early meditation at Vessali. Alara taught Siddhartha meditation, especially a dhyānic state called the "sphere of nothingness" (*ākāśaññāyatana*). Gautama eventually equaled Alara, who could not teach him more, saying, "You are the same as I am now. There is no difference between us. Stay here and take my place and teach my students with me." Gautama was not interested in staying. After leaving, the Siddhartha found a new teacher, Uddaka Ramaputta." Src: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alara_Kalama | https://www.dhammadownload.com/index.php?title=Alara_Kalama

²¹⁰ **Uddaka Ramaputta:** "While Ālāra Kālāma accepted the Buddha as an equal and asked him to lead his community alongside him, Uddaka Rāmaputta acknowledged the Buddha as his superior and equal to his predecessor, Uddaka Rāma, who had actually attained the "sphere of neither perception nor non-perception" (*nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*), which Rāmaputta had not reached. Uddaka Rāmaputta asked the Buddha to take sole leadership of his students and community, but the Buddha preferred to travel

Brahminic tradition. However, over the course of several years he became unsatisfied with their teachings, which were isolated to just intense absorbed concentration on nothingness. He rejected the *samaya ditthi* (religious views) they upheld. He then tried extreme asceticism but found it unhelpful in achieving liberation. He rejected the polytheistic beliefs of the time and the idea of an all-supreme being, as he saw it as irrelevant to the ultimate question of why humans suffer and die. The Buddha rejected all belief systems (*samaya ditthi*) that taught such concepts considering them to be wrong.

The Language of the Pali Texts

The importance of comprehending the history and evolution of a word's meaning cannot be overstated when comparing ancient language concepts to conventional language concepts of modern usage, particularly so as is the case with the word "religion." This is especially true for Pāli words, which often have broad meanings that cannot be easily defined by modern language because the meaning changes with the context. During the Buddha's time, multiple languages were spoken, and it's likely that he was fluent in several of them. Although he could have used Sanskrit Brahmana, he chose to teach in the common language of the region where he lived so that people could fully understand his teachings, which was more likely than not the Ardhamagadhi (Ardha-ma-ga-dhi) language, which is considered the parent language of Pali.

Some scholars have suggested that the Pali language is a branch of Sanskrit. However, this is an erroneous claim. Sanskrit was the language of the Brahman priests and was used as an "official" language, whereas the Buddha is believed to have spoken in the common language of the region where he taught, in ancient Magadha. The ancient Middle Indo-Aryan language of Ardhamagadhi was spoken in the Magadha region, where the Buddha lived and taught. Both Ardhamagadhi and Pali belong to the same Prakrit language family, which emerged in ancient India around the 3rd century BCE before the Buddha's time. Pali is considered a refined form of Ardhamagadhi and was used to write and speak the early Dhamma, also known as the Tipitaka or Pali Canon. There is a close linguistic and cultural connection between Ardhamagadhi and Pali. As the Buddha's teachings spread throughout India and beyond, the Ardhamagadhi language was gradually modified and simplified into what is now known as the Pali language. While Pali is not a direct descendant of Ardhamagadhi, it is closely related and shares many linguistic and cultural similarities.

on. Following his awakening, the Buddha first thought of Uddaka Rāmaputta as someone who would be able to understand and realize his dhamma, but later learned that Uddaka Rāmaputta had already died by that time. Despite this confidence, in other texts the Buddha disparaged Uddaka Rāmaputta as someone who claimed attainments and understanding without having achieved them for himself. Src: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uddaka_R%C4%81maputta | https://www.dhammadownload.com/index.php?title=Uddaka_Ramaputta

Ardhamagadhi and Pali are tonal or phonetic languages, meaning that words from these languages often have multiple meanings depending on the context in which they are used. One such example is the word *dukkha*, which broadly conveys the idea of anything causing stress or dissatisfaction. The Pāli and Prakrit languages from the Buddha's era, like Latin, convey broader concepts rather than singular definitions, and their meanings can vary greatly depending on the context in which they are used.

The critics who insist on labeling Buddhism as a religion often resort to flimsy arguments to defend their baseless claims. They contend that modern language sources, such as dictionaries, are used to define religion, and that only selective definitions are employed to support their flawed position. But these arguments are as weak as the faith they seek to defend. In fact, the very definition of "Buddhism" as a *non-monotheistic* religion of Indian origin undermines their claim that it is a religion. After all, a non-monotheistic religion does not acknowledge the existence of a supreme supernatural being. It follows that using this definition to support the claim that Buddhism is a religion is nothing but a deceitful ploy to mask the truth.

Similarly, the Latin word *religio* encompasses a larger concept rather than a single definition, and its connotation varies based on its contextual usage. In ancient Rome, *religio* was used to describe a group of people bound together by a common belief system, which was not limited to spirituality or the belief in supernatural beings, but was also used in connection with Roman politics.²¹¹

Religion and politics were heavily intertwined in the Roman Empire, with the political system relying on the cult of the Caesars, who were considered divine representatives of the gods on Earth. Each emperor had their own cult temple, and if they died in good standing, they were deified by the Senate as a god. From the time of Julius Caesar up to the present day, the Holy Roman Empire of the Roman Catholic Church, the ancient Emperors, and modern-day Pontiffs or Popes have all borne the title of Pontifex Maximus (*see image on following page*).²¹²

²¹¹ Religare/Religere: Etymology: "The Oxford Dictionary states: "The connection of the word religion with religare, to bind, has usually been favored by modern writers. This etymology, given by the Roman grammarian (end of 4th) cent. A. D.) Servius (Belligio, id est metus ab eo quod, mentem religet, dicta religio was supported by the Christian philosopher Lactantius (about 313 a. d.) who quotes the expression of the celebrated Roman philosophical poet Lucretius (c. 96 to 55 B. c.): *2 religionum animum nodis exsolvere*, in proof that he considered ligare, to bind, to be the root of religio. Cicero derives religio from relegere, as meaning to go through or over again in reading, speech or thought. Cicero says. *Qui omnia quae ad cultum deorum pertinerent diligenter pertractarent, et tamquam relegerent, sunt dicti religiosi ex relegendo, ut elegantis ex eligendo.*" Src: Etymology of Religion: Journal of the American Oriental Society, Hoyt, Sara F. Vol. 32 | <https://archive.org/details/jstor-3087765/page/n1/mode/1up>

²¹² Pontifex Maximus: Src: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pontifex_maximus | <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/julius-caesar/pontifex-maximus/9594019A3278317C3945903E26476B09>



In short, those who insist that Buddhism is a religion are simply perpetuating a myth that has no basis in reality. The truth is that Buddhism is a philosophy, a way of life, a path to enlightenment, and a rejection of the superstition and dogma that characterizes the very notion of religion. The sooner we dispel this myth and embrace the truth, the better off people who wish to learn the Dhamma we will be.

Labelling the teachings of the Buddha as religion is an instance of what I call "smooth labeling." Additionally, as previously mentioned, proponents often bring up the absence of the word 'religion' in ancient Pāli texts. However, this is not entirely accurate. The Pāli word *saddhamma*²¹³ is frequently used in the earliest Pāli texts to differentiate true teachings from other religious belief systems (*samaya*). *Saddhamma* refers to a system of truth. The root of the Pāli word *saddhamma* is *saddha*,²¹⁴ which translates to mean "belief" or "confidence."

213 Saddhamma: Pāli: सद्धम्म; Def: "The true teachings; the true dhamma, the best belief, good practice, the doctrine of the good." Src: https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/Pāli_query.py?qs=saddhamma&searchhws=yes&matchtype=exact

214 Saddha: Pāli: सद्धDef: "Believing; faith; felt to be [true]." Src: https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/Pāli_query.py?qs=saddha&matchtype=default

As previously stated, the Pāli word *saddha* is commonly translated as 'faith,' but a more accurate translation is "confidence." Also, previously mentioned is the meaning of the Pali word *ditthi*, which is often translated to convey the contextual meaning of the modern English word "belief," but which more correctly means "view" or "viewpoint." Hence, the Pāli language indicates that the concept of religious-like systems was recognized during the Buddha's time, even though they may not have used the Latin-derived word or concept of "religion." Is this not a distinction that identifies yet another anachronism? *Saddhamma* extends the meaning of *saddha* and *ditthi* to refer to "the system" or "a system" of beliefs or confidences (*ditthi*).

Understanding Key Concepts of the Dhamma

According to the Dhamma teachings, there are four qualities that one must possess to have achieved what is known in the Pali texts as the *Sotapanna* stage of consciousness,²¹⁵ which is considered the first stage of enlightenment. These four qualities are often referred to as the Four Factors of Stream Entry.

1. **Sotapatti-phala** - The realization of the truth of the Dhamma. This means that the individual has a deep understanding of the Four Noble Truths, the Three Universal Characteristics, and the principle of Dependent Origination.
2. **Dhamma-vicaya** - The ability to investigate and discern the true nature of phenomena. This means that the individual has developed a clear and penetrating insight into the nature of reality, and is able to distinguish between wholesome and unwholesome mental states.
3. **Sila** - Ethical conduct. This means that the individual has developed a strong commitment to living an ethical life, based on the principles of non-harming, generosity, and compassion.
4. **Citta-ekaggatā** - Concentration of mind. This means that the individual has developed the ability to focus the mind and maintain a sustained and tranquil state of concentration, which is essential for developing wisdom and insight.

215 Sota-apanna: Pāli: (Sota) सौत Def: "A hearer, a stream." Pāli: (Apanna) [As differentiated from pañña (पञ्च)] आपन्न Def: "Gone down, entered." Comb Def: "One who has gone down the Path, the stream; entered upon; 1. entered upon, fallen into, possessed of, having done. One who stands on the lowest step of the Path is called a sotāpanna. The classic definition of the stream-enterer is "one who has entered the supramundane path." Supramundane is a fancy word for "transcending worldliness." Src: <https://www.learnreligions.com/srotapanna-the-stream-enterer-4015169> | https://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/study/into_the_stream.html#part2

The Four Factors of Stream Entry are among the oldest teachings of the Buddha and are mentioned in several suttas in the Pali Canon. These suttas include the *Samannaphala Sutta* (DN 2),²¹⁶ the *Sotapattisamyutta* (SN 55),²¹⁷ the *Anupada Sutta* (MN 111),²¹⁸ and the *Sallekha Sutta* (MN 8)²¹⁹. Each of these suttas provides a different perspective on the Four Factors of Stream Entry, with the *Samannaphala Sutta* describing the conversation between King Ajatasattu and the Buddha in which he explains these factors, and the *Sotapattisamyutta* providing various conversations between the Buddha and his students on this topic. The *Anupada Sutta* describes the gradual training that leads to the attainment of the Four Factors of Stream Entry, while the *Sallekha Sutta* describes the training in ethics, concentration, and wisdom necessary for this attainment.

The *Sotapanna* stage is a mental awakening attained when an individual possesses these four factors, which mark a profound shift in perspective and a sense of confidence and clarity about the path towards liberation. This mental state is characterized by unwavering confidence in the truth of the Dhamma, making it impossible to revert to one's previous mental state.

²¹⁶ "**Samannaphala**" (समन्नफल) can be broken down into two parts: "samanna," which means "equal" or "common," and "phala," which means "fruit" or "result." In the context of the Dhamma, "Samannaphala" refers to the fruits or benefits that one can obtain from practicing the Buddhist path, specifically referring to the benefits that are common to all practitioners, regardless of their individual circumstances or level of mental attainments. The term "Samannaphala" is also associated with the "Samannaphala Sutta," which is the second discourse in the Digha Nikaya, a collection of long discourses in the Pali Canon. The Samannaphala Sutta discusses the benefits and fruits of the contemplative life and provides an account of the Buddha's teachings on the progressive stages of practice, ultimately leading to enlightenment.

²¹⁷ "**Sotapattisamyutta**" can be broken down into two parts: "sotapatti" and "samyutta." "Sotapatti" means "stream-entry" or "stream-winner," referring to the first stage of enlightenment in the Pali texts, while "samyutta" means "collection" or "group." Thus, "Sotapattisamyutta" refers to a collection or group of discourses in the Pali Canon that are specifically focused on the teachings and experiences related to the stage of stream-entry or stream-winning. These texts can be found in the Samyutta Nikaya, which is a collection of suttas grouped by theme, and are part of the Sutta Pitaka, one of the three main divisions of the Pali Canon.

²¹⁸ "**Anupada**" (अनुपद) can be broken down into two parts: "anu," which means "along" or "following," and "pada," which means "foot," "step," or "position." In the context of the Dhamma, "Anupada" is often used to describe a detailed or step-by-step analysis, examination, or progression of something. For example, "Anupada Sutta" is a discourse in the Pali Canon where the Buddha provides a detailed, step-by-step account of the Venerable Sariputta's meditation and his attainment of successive stages of mental absorption (jhana) and higher mental states, culminating in Nibbana (Nirvana). In this sutta, the term "Anupada" emphasizes the progressive nature and thorough examination of Sariputta's meditative experience.

²¹⁹ "**Sallekha**" (सल्लेख) can be understood as "effacement" or "wearing away." In the context of the Dhamma, "Sallekha" refers to the process of eliminating or wearing away defilements, negative qualities, or unwholesome mental states in one's mind, such as greed, hatred, and delusion, which are the primary causes of suffering in the Buddha's teachings. The term is also associated with the "Sallekha Sutta," a discourse in the Majjhima Nikaya, which is a collection of suttas in the Pali Canon. In this sutta, the Buddha teaches about the practice of "sallekha" as a means of purification of the mind, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and actively working to eliminate these defilements in order to progress on the path to enlightenment and attain mental liberation from greed, hatred and delusion.

In the crucible of personal experience and knowledge, one attains a profound stage of comprehension and mental refinement, bearing witness to the veracity of the Buddha's teachings. To assert that contemporary individuals have no means to verify the legitimacy of the Enlightened One's words is to undermine the very essence of the *sotapanna* stage, as well as the mental state of the Bodhisatta, even for those navigating the vicissitudes of our modern era.

Yet, some persist in their ill-conceived crusade to label Buddhism as a religion, invoking the hallowed halls of the Oxford Dictionary to define religion as a system of faith and worship. While it is true that the notion of faith finds resonance in the Buddhist context, the act of worship is conspicuously absent, leaving nothing to worship. The Pali term *saddha*, so often mistranslated as "faith," signifies not the blind adherence to dogma, but a mental state cultivated through empirical evidence and firsthand experience.

The proponents of this misguided view that the Buddha's teachings and methods constitutes a religion frequently rely on sources like Wikipedia, which have the unfortunate tendency to paint Buddhism with the broad brush of consensus and superficial similarities rather than a rigorous examination of its ontological distinctiveness. In so doing, they reveal the paucity of their own arguments and the glaring absence of intellectual rigor that underpins their position.

The insipid assertion that *saddha* can be equated to religious faith is not only a travesty of understanding but a gross misinterpretation of the Buddha's teachings. Far from being a mere religious doctrine, the Dhamma and the Buddha's message offer a profound way of life, a comprehensive philosophy, and an emancipating path, grounded in one's own direct experience and discernment. To suggest otherwise is to indulge in a grotesque distortion that finds no footing in the original teachings of the Buddha.

To demonstrate the folly of this conflation, consider the following definitions. Wikipedia proclaims, "Religion is a social-cultural system of designated behaviors and practices, morals, worldviews, texts, sanctified places, prophecies, ethics, or organizations, that relates humanity to supernatural, transcendental, or spiritual elements."²²⁰ On the other hand, the venerable Merriam-Webster dictionary describes 'religion' as, "The belief in a god or in a group of gods: an organized system of beliefs, ceremonies, and rules used to worship a god or a group of gods."²²¹

Which of these definitions shall we accept, and which shall we reject? The answer, my dear reader, lies not in the arbitrary whims of intellectual fancy but in the crucible of one's direct experience. Amidst this cacophony of definitions, we must ask ourselves: what nefarious purpose lies behind the claimant's insinuations? What dark motives lurk beneath the surface? The answer becomes self-evident upon closer examination of the sources employed by these peddlers of misinformation.

220 Religion Definition: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion>

221 Religion Definition: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/religion>

The proclivity for manipulation and obfuscation that these misguided individuals exhibit is made all the more evident by their selective endorsement of definitions that conveniently suit their aims, while blithely ignoring those that do not. As the discerning mind peers through the fog of deception, the intellectual dishonesty at the heart of their argument is laid bare for all to see.

The adherents of this spurious claim are loath to consider a wider array of sources, such as Merriam-Webster's rendition of the term 'religion', opting instead for cherry-picked definitions that bolster their position. The Dhamma, devoid of any notion of supreme beings or deities, eludes classification under the current definitions of religion. It becomes apparent that certain criteria must be met for a belief system to be deemed a religion:

- Worship of a god or goddess;
- A philosophy, belief, or doctrine that instructs followers to venerate said deity;
- Prescribed behavior that directs the lives of adherents.

The bewildering inconsistency in defining religion is hardly unexpected, as it is born of human ingenuity rather than an incontrovertible fact of the cosmos. Wikipedia's definition errs on the side of over-inclusivity, encompassing everything from ethics to organizations, while Merriam-Webster's description is excessively narrow, focusing solely on the worship of divine entities. Those who insist on branding the Buddha's teachings as a religion frequently turn to sources like Wikipedia, seizing upon definitions that fortify their stance, all the while disregarding the broader spectrum of definitions that fail to do so.

The crux of the matter is that Buddhism defies categorization within the Western construct of religion, as it eschews the worship of gods or goddesses and notions of supernatural beings. Rather, it centers on the individual's personal experience and direct knowledge, fostered through the cultivation of mindfulness, ethics, and wisdom. Though some may find it expedient to label Buddhism a religion, such a designation patently misrepresents the essence of the Buddha's teachings. To shoehorn Buddhism into the confines of religion is to perpetrate a form of cultural imperialism and ignorance, rooted in a myopic and prejudiced understanding of the very nature of religion. The present accepted meaning of the word faith:

- Belief and trust in and loyalty to God;
- Belief in the traditional doctrines of a religion; Firm belief in something for which there is no proof;
- Complete trust;
- Something that is believed especially with strong conviction; especially a system of religious beliefs.

The concept of faith is a fundamental tenet of many religions, yet it is a deeply flawed concept that relies on subjective beliefs and experiences, rather than objective observation and verification. The definition of faith, as stated in the Christian 'scriptures', is based on the "assured expectation of what is hoped for, the evident demonstration of realities that are not seen." However, this definition is nothing more than a subjective belief or experience, with no objective basis in reality. It asks one to believe in something that can never be seen or proven, and to have confidence in it without any evidence to support it. This is the cornerstone of all faith-based religions of the world, and it is a dangerous and destructive concept that has been used throughout history to justify all manner of atrocities and injustices. The idea that one can have faith in something that cannot be seen or proven is a relic of our primitive past, and it has no place in a modern, rational society. We must reject faith-based beliefs and embrace the pursuit of objective truth, based on reason, evidence, and critical thinking. To this point, famed writer and philosopher **Ayn Rand** said:

"If devotion to truth is the hallmark of morality, then there is no greater, nobler, more heroic form of devotion than the act of a man who assumes the responsibility of thinking. The alleged short-cut to knowledge, which is faith, is only a short-circuit destroying the mind. Qua [character of as] religion, no - in the sense of blind belief, belief unsupported by, or contrary to, the facts of reality and the conclusions of reason.

Faith, as such, is extremely detrimental to human life: it is the negation of reason. They may have a good influence or proper principles to inculcate, but in a very contradictory context and, on a very - how should I say it? - dangerous or malevolent base: on the ground of faith. Faith is the worst curse of mankind, as the exact antithesis and enemy of thought. To rest one's case on faith means to concede that reason is on the side of one's enemies- that one has no rational arguments to offer." ²²²

While writing this section, I imagined myself in a discussion with philosopher and neuroscientist Sam Harris. I apologize to Sam for any errors in representation of what he might actually answer. Our imaginary discussion follows:

Me: Sam, what do you think of Ayn Rand's statement that "faith is the worst curse of mankind"?

Sam Harris: I agree with Ayn Rand that faith can be detrimental to human life, but I would argue that the problem is not with faith itself but with the beliefs that people hold on faith alone, without any evidence or reason to support them.

Me: So, you would say that the problem is with blind faith?

²²² **Rand, Ayn:** <https://www.learnreligions.com/ayn-rand-quotes-on-religion-and-reason-4003794>

Sam Harris: Exactly. Blind faith is dangerous because it can lead people to hold beliefs that are not supported by evidence or reason, and it can cause people to act in ways that are harmful to themselves and others.

Me: Ayn Rand also argues that faith is the negation of reason. Do you agree with her on this point?

Sam Harris: In many cases, yes. Faith can often lead people to reject reason and evidence in favor of their beliefs. This can be especially dangerous when those beliefs are about important issues like politics, morality, or health.

Me: So, do you think that faith has any value at all?

Sam Harris: I think that faith can provide people with comfort and a sense of community, and it can inspire them to do good things. However, these benefits can also be achieved without resorting to blind faith. People can find comfort and community in secular organizations, and they can be inspired to do good things based on evidence and reason rather than faith alone.

Me: So, in your view, is it possible to have both faith and reason?

Sam Harris: It's possible to have faith and reason coexist, but reason should always take priority. When we hold beliefs based on evidence and reason, we are more likely to arrive at true beliefs, and we are more likely to act in ways that are beneficial to ourselves and others. Blind faith, on the other hand, can lead us astray and cause harm.

Belief in something that cannot be proven or seen is a hallmark of theistic faith-based religions. It is a natural human inclination to be skeptical of things that lack evidence or cannot be verified. For instance, if someone were to sell you a million-dollar mansion without presenting any evidence of its existence, most people would instantly suspect a swindle. Many individuals, including myself, have been involved with various Christian denominations and have found it easy to take refuge in the idea of "having faith" instead of "knowing faith" based on evidence. However, my investigations into the Buddha's teachings have never led me to suspect that there is anything deceptive about them.

The Pāli term *saddha*, frequently and unfortunately translated as "faith," implies a conviction grounded in evidence, which is distinct from the religious meaning of "faith" as conviction without evidence. In theistic-based religions, there is no requirement to scrutinize or challenge one's convictions, and doing so is often prohibited. This notion of unproven belief is at the core of many theistic-based religions. The Buddha, in contrast, was against having blind faith.

Purpose of Life

Behavioral scientists Reker and Wong²²³ define personal meaning as the "*cognizance of order, coherence and purpose in one's existence, the pursuit and attainment of worthwhile goals, and an accompanying sense of fulfillment.*" Conversely, a Christian Catechism states: "What is man's main purpose?" The answer is: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and enjoy Him forever."²²⁴ Which definition of the purpose of life sounds closer to what the Buddha taught? Which definition aligns more with something that is comprehensible? Which definition aligns with something that you could visualize achieving? For most, the answer to the question: *What is the purpose of life?* (*āyatana*)(*paramattha*) is subjective in nature, as it can vary depending on individual beliefs, values, and cultural background. Some belief systems see the purpose of human life as fulfilling a divine plan or serving a higher power, while others view it as finding happiness, personal fulfillment, or making a positive impact on the world.

Some people may see the purpose of life as a combination of these things or as something entirely unique to them. Ultimately, the purpose of human life is a personal and individual matter that each person must determine for themselves. However, the Buddha was not satisfied with these values or perspectives of life. He wanted to know specifically what the purpose of life was. Life, he contemplated, certainly had a purpose, but what was that purpose, formed the core of his questions in relation to why we suffer and die. Upon his awakening he realized that the purpose of life was to end one's suffering and attain lasting peace and happiness, by blowing out the causes of our suffering, which is known as Nibbana.

The Buddha's teachings do not specifically address the meaning or purpose of life, but instead focus is placed on the potential for human life when one ends their suffering caused by embracing cravings and conceptual attachments, rather than suppressing or denying them. This approach leads to freedom and release from suffering and rebirth. Unlike some contemporary worldviews, the Buddha's teachings emphasize critical investigation, reasoning, and direct experience rather than blind faith. Psychological analysis can bring about insight and understanding, but only through personal experience and self-reflection.

Those who claim that the Buddha's teachings are a religion often cite instances in the Pāli texts where the Buddha used the word *saddha*, clinging to the modern conventional meaning of the word "faith." However, this interpretation is incorrect and anachronistic. The Pāli word for faith is completely different from the current understanding of the meaning of faith in the modern world.

²²³ **Meaning of Life:** Reker, G.T., & Wong, P.T.P. (1988). Aging as an individual process: Towards a theory of personal meaning. In J.E. Birren, & V.L. Bengston (Eds.), *Emergent theories of aging* (pp. 214–246). New York: Springer.

²²⁴ **Christian Catechism:** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meaning_of_life

When the Buddha used the word *saddha*, he did so in the context of direct experiences that can be verified by someone who practices the Dhamma. This context further distinguishes the kind of faith represented in the Dhamma from the world view of faith associated with religion. None of the world's religions have a word equivalent to *saddha*. Thus, categorizing *saddha* with the conventional world view of faith is incorrect. This difference highlights another ontological distinction, demonstrating the lack of similarity necessary for a valid comparison.

Religion v. Dhamma

The following are the major differences between the teachings of the Buddha and faith-based religions:

- 1) There is no supreme being or deity who dispenses rewards and punishments or demands exclusive worship in the Dhamma.
- 2) The Buddha's teachings are not the basis for a religion in the traditional sense. The concept of a religious system named after the Buddha did not exist for the first two thousand years since the Buddha's death. The Buddha's teachings do not contain the doctrine of faith in an unseen, unprovable supernatural being.
- 3) Unlike the world's religions, the ultimate goal for followers of the Buddha's teachings is awakening and liberation from samsara, rather than salvation from sin.
- 4) No one who has achieved enlightenment and become a Buddha is a savior who saves others with divine power. A follower of the Buddha's teachings seeks refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, with the Buddha serving as an example of the incomparable teacher.
- 5) The Buddha is regarded only as a teacher and the relationship between a follower and the Buddha's teachings is solely that of teacher and student.
- 6) The Buddha's teachings place a strong emphasis on self-reliance, self-discipline, and individual effort, and do not require blind faith.
- 7) The Dhamma is universal and not exclusively tied to the Buddha's teachings, indicating that the Buddha did not create these universal truths but rather gained direct knowledge of them.

- 8) The concept of a place of eternal punishment and damnation, as taught in theistic religions, does not exist in the Buddha's teachings. The Buddha taught that Hell is simply one of six realms in samsara, which is a woeful mental state not a physical place.
- 9) Dhamma teachings do not have the concept of sin, as each individual is responsible for their own actions through the law of kamma (karma).
- 10) Followers of theistic religions cannot have the same nature as their God, who is omniscient, all-loving, all-powerful, and pure. The Buddha taught that all sentient beings have a Buddha nature and can become a mentally awakened being through diligent practice, achieving a non-deluded state free from mental afflictions and suffering.
- 11) Theistic religions offer no explanation for the fate and inequality of humankind, while the Buddha's teachings of kamma provide a clear explanation through the connection between human actions and consequences.
- 12) The Buddha's teachings prohibit acts such as war and capital punishment, which are supported by many of theistic religions, and instead place a high value on compassion for all living things, including animals.
- 13) While the world's religions focus on doing good and being good, the Buddha's teachings go beyond these concepts, as attachment to good deeds is seen as another form of attachment and craving causing samsara. Good is the natural consequence of bringing the effects of greed, hatred and delusion under control through practice.
- 14) There is no tenet in the Dhamma that allows for killing someone for breaking a moral principle, and there is no concept of killing in the name of religion or any other worldly reason.
- 15) The Buddha's teachings do not address the origin of existence, unlike theistic religions which posit a "first cause."
- 16) The Buddha achieved awakening and gained clarity through his own efforts, but was not invincible, almighty, or omniscient and did not create life or any part of the universe.
- 17) While many religions include a form of meditation, often in the form of repetitive prayers, the Buddha emphasized the importance of single-minded meditation practice for gaining correct knowledge and insight into one's own existence, making it a crucial tool for self-awakening.

- 18) Unique to the Buddha's teachings is the concept of emptiness and the concept that the reality of nature is that all things are both empty of any intrinsic essence and are impermanent.
- 19) The never-ending cycle of rebirth and death (samsara) is the most fundamental teaching of the Buddha. This teaching defines the cause of humankind's existence as perpetual cycles due to ignorance and kamma. This cycle only ends when a sentient being attains release through self-awakening (Nibbana/Nirvana), which is a 'blowing out' of the flame of greed, hatred and delusion, defilements that cause suffering. All theistic Sky God religions teach that there is but one realm of release, which is heaven in the presence of a supernatural god entity.

Taking into consideration the preceding list of 19 fundamental differences between the modern conceptual meaning of "religion" and the teachings of the Buddha, should lead one to the obvious conclusion that the Buddha's teachings do not support the concept that it is a religion.

If It Must Be – Then let there be equanimity.

If we are to accept the idea of "Buddhism" to meet social expectations, it should be viewed as a system of analysis and reasoning, rather than a religion. The fundamental teachings of the Buddha have remained unchanged for over 2,600 years, but interpretations and meanings have evolved, particularly with the addition of the various Mahayana forms of Buddhism. There are presently three main schools of Buddhism: Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana (Tibetan). After the Buddha's demise, a division occurred over the meaning of what a Bodhisatta and an Arahant are. Theravada remains the sole school devoted to the Buddha's initial teachings.

According to the Buddha, the concept of equanimity is a state of mind known as *upekkha* in Pali, which is a central concept of the Dhamma. It refers to a mental state of balance and stability in the face of life's ups and downs. In this state, one remains impartial and unaffected by the vicissitudes of life, maintaining a clear, calm, and centered awareness. This state of equanimity is considered a necessary component of the path to liberation and enlightenment, as it helps to reduce the impact of negative experiences and cultivate a balanced and harmonious mind. In the Dhamma teachings, *upekkha* is one of the Four Immeasurable States, alongside loving-kindness (*metta*), compassion (*karuna*), and sympathetic joy (*mudita*).

The Buddha's teachings were originally known as *vibhajjavāda*, a concatenated Pali word. *Vibhajja* translates to 'analysis' or 'detailing,' and *vada* means 'doctrine' or 'viewpoint.' As a result, the whole term *vibhajjavada* refers to a viewpoint constructed from analysis. This term perfectly captures the Buddha's teachings because the efficacy of the teachings is based on an individual's analysis. *Vibhajjavāda* is a term used to describe the Buddha's doctrine of analysis or discrimination of his teachings.

The term *vibhajjavāda* literally means "the doctrine of separation" or "the doctrine of distinction." It refers to the practice of analyzing and discerning the nature of reality through one's own direct experience and understanding. In this context, the term is often used to describe the Theravada approach to understanding the Buddha's teachings, which emphasizes the importance of individual effort, self-reliance, and self-awakening. The *vibhajjavāda* approach emphasizes the importance of using one's own intelligence and intuition to understand the teachings of the Buddha, rather than relying on blind faith or external authority.

Equanimity is a critical aspect of practice. However, cultivating equanimity does not entail becoming a doormat, accepting all viewpoints without discernment, or ignoring obvious discrepancies. Instead, it involves developing a balanced and impartial mind that remains neutral and non-judgmental in the face of different opinions and beliefs. This necessitates a thorough comprehension of the reasons behind various viewpoints and a focus on the shared goals of all practitioners, such as achieving enlightenment and alleviating suffering.

In other words, equanimity is not about blindly accepting all perspectives, but rather about understanding and appreciating different viewpoints while maintaining a clear and unbiased mind. It is a mental quality that allows one to remain calm and steady in the face of both pleasure and pain, good and evil, and the diversity of beings and experiences. Practicing equanimity does not mean compromising one's own values or beliefs; rather, it entails developing a mature and balanced approach to life.

Maintaining an attitude of equanimity is essential when studying the Buddha's teachings. This can help prevent the development of attachment, aversion, or confusion, promoting instead a peaceful and open state of mind that is more receptive to understanding and applying the teachings in one's life. By fostering equanimity, one can view the various interpretations and schools of Buddhism as opportunities for learning and growth, rather than as sources of division or conflict. This approach allows one to practice the teachings with a clear and impartial perspective, free from preconceptions and biases, and to rely on personal experience as the ultimate gauge of truth and value. However, on the other hand, if one has more than a cursory understanding of the Dhamma, and comprehends the concepts taught by the Buddha, and is made aware of a teaching or claim that is wholly contrary to the original teachings of the Buddha, that individual has an obligation to reveal such things. Equanimity does not imply complacency.

The current conception of being a "Moderate" typically refers to political or social views that fall between two extremes. This moderate position is often viewed as "pragmatic" or "sensible" and is frequently linked to compromise and finding common ground. However, this concept differs from the Buddhist notion of equanimity, which involves non-attachment and non-judgment, rather than a compromise or middle ground between two extremes.

To practice equanimity, one must remain impartial and balanced when encountering differing opinions and beliefs, without becoming overly attached or identified with any particular viewpoint. This does not imply that one must remain passive or take no action, but rather that one must make decisions and take actions that are in line with achieving mental awakening and the ultimate goal of relieving suffering.

In contrast, the moderate position often entails finding a compromise between two opposing viewpoints, regardless of whether that compromise is in line with the ultimate goal of relieving suffering or achieving mental awakening. The moderate position may be seen as a way of avoiding conflict or making peace, rather than a way of achieving a higher state of consciousness or understanding.

In the context of the Buddha's teachings, equanimity involves making decisions based on reason, compassion, and a clear understanding of the interconnectedness of all things. This means taking a position or making a decision that is in line with the ultimate goal of relieving suffering, even if that decision may not be perceived as moderate or compromise-oriented by others.

While the notion of being a moderate may be useful in certain political or social contexts, although I can not see how, it should not be conflated with the Dhamma concept of equanimity. Practicing equanimity requires remaining impartial and non-judgmental, and making decisions that are in line with achieving mental awakening and relieving suffering, rather than merely finding a compromise between two opposing viewpoints.

Political moderates, just as religious moderates, can be just as dangerous as extremists, as they provide cover and legitimacy to extremist views and actions. Moderates often fail to challenge extreme beliefs and behaviors because they are too focused on finding common ground and avoiding conflict. I find that moderates are often less knowledgeable about the issues at hand, and that their attempts to find compromise can sometimes lead to bad outcomes. This may also apply to those who claim that the teachings of the Buddha constitute religion. Rather than taking a position with the Buddha, they take a more political-like position that to include his teachings with the overall consensus of the modern-day concept of religion is not only correct but moderate.

Regarding religious moderates, I argued that they enable and legitimize religious extremism by failing to fully reject or challenge fundamentalist views. Moderates tend to give cover to fundamentalist views by refusing to criticize the underlying religious doctrines that support them. Religious moderates are part of the problem of religious extremism, rather than part of the solution.

The issue of whether or not the Buddha's teachings are a religion, require more radical scrutiny than those offered by persons prone to being religious moderates. We need to be more willing to challenge beliefs that are harmful to the Buddha's teachings and practices, and to work towards more rational and evidence-based reasoning.

Attachment

The Importance of the Raft and Water Snake Analogies

The Buddha's "raft" and "water snake" analogies are related teachings that emphasize the importance of understanding the nature of the Dhamma and using it skillfully to reach liberation from suffering. The "raft" analogy, found in the *Alagaddupama Sutta* (MN 22), teaches that the Buddha's teachings are like a raft that helps individuals make the journey away from ignorance, wrong-views, and attachment toward liberation from suffering. However, once one has reached the other shore, the raft should be abandoned as it is no longer needed.

The "water snake" analogy, which is found in the *Cula-Malunkiyovada Sutta* (MN 63), teaches that the Dhamma is like a water snake that can be grasped in two ways. If grasped too loosely, the snake slips away. If grasped too tightly, the snake *will* bite and cause harm. Instead, one must grasp the snake at the right level of firmness, with skill and sensitivity, in order to make use of it.

Together, these analogies teach the importance of understanding the Dhamma and using it skillfully, neither holding onto it too tightly nor letting it go too easily. They also emphasize the importance of letting go of the Dhamma once it has served its purpose, just as one would let go of the raft after crossing over the river. In essence, both analogies emphasize the importance of skillful means, proper understanding, and letting go in the path towards liberation. They remind practitioners that *the teachings are not to be blindly clung to*, but rather used as a tool to reach a deeper understanding and achieve ultimate freedom from suffering.

A Closer Look at the Raft Analogy

The path to awakening is a singular journey with no turning back. Once one has achieved awakening, there is no need to return to the state of ignorance that one has left behind. However, this does not mean that complete awakening is the only journey. Gradual awakening to the truths about the nature of reality brings with it its own level of mental awakening, which is a unique and invaluable experience in itself.

In the Buddha's teachings, the Dhamma is often compared to a makeshift raft that is constructed by an individual who seeks to cross a great river to reach safety, happiness, and liberation from suffering. This analogy underscores the significance of the Dhamma as only a means to reach the ultimate goal of awakening, but also the importance of relinquishing the Dhamma once that goal has been achieved. The Dhamma should never be treated as a crutch.

According to the Buddha, the teachings are a means to an end, and not an end in themselves. Once an individual has reached the other side of the river, the raft should be abandoned. Once an individual has achieved awakening, they should let go of the Dhamma. This does not mean that one should stop practicing altogether, but rather that one should shift the focus of one's practice from the teachings specific to that goal to a more general practice of cultivating wisdom and compassion.

The attachment to intellectual pageantry, intellectual wrangling, and gaining a sense of mental pleasure or pride from one's intellectual prowess is a common pitfall for many practitioners. This behavior is no different than the behavior exhibited by faith-based religions to promote their own dogma. The Buddha's teachings emphasize the idea that the attachment to concepts and beliefs is not the goal of the Dhamma, but rather the detachment from them.

The goal of the Dhamma is to develop one's own wisdom, compassion, and understanding in order to achieve release from suffering. The Buddha's teachings underscore the significance of personal effort and self-reliance in the pursuit of enlightenment. In this way, the Dhamma emphasizes the importance of practice, rather than simply accumulating knowledge or attaining temporary happiness.

To fully comprehend and understand the Buddha's teachings, one must be willing to learn and have an open mind. This willingness is essential to building the raft, which is a metaphor for constructing the elements necessary to change one's life and gain awakening. Merely collecting Buddhist objects and listening to Dhamma talks does not make someone a Buddhist; it is the willingness to practice and put the teachings into action that actually counts.

The "raft" analogy emphasizes the importance of personal effort, self-reliance, and a willingness to learn and practice in the pursuit of enlightenment. It highlights the fundamental difference between religious devotion in faith-based religions and the practice of Buddhism. The goal is not to please a divine being or gain its favor but to develop one's own wisdom, compassion, and understanding in order to achieve liberation from suffering. The raft is merely a means to an end, and once the end is reached, it is no longer necessary.

One of the fundamental challenges facing human beings is the ease with which we can deceive ourselves into accepting as true something that is not, especially when it provides a sense of comfort. This deceptive tendency is often at work when people convince themselves that they are doing good, and thereby gain a sense of mental ease, which is actually an illusion. Such is the case with the often-amorphous sense of "spirituality," which can provide a false sense of security and well-being, unless it is supported by a genuine transformative practice.

Many individuals attend group meditation sessions believing that this is all that is required, similar to attending a Church Sunday school. Upon leaving a meditation session or retreat, they may feel as though they have done something good for themselves, but unless there is tangible evidence that this experience is genuinely transforming their lives, it is simply a mental mirage.

Dhamma practice entails developing a regular meditation habit, and gradually incorporating the teachings into one's daily life. Meditation and the Dhamma are the necessary materials, such as wood, rope, and sticks, that one uses to construct the raft. The visual raft is initially built upon the teachings of the Four Noble Truths, which serve as the foundation for building the raft.

- Direct experience (*samparāyika ñāṇa*) is one of the essential components of building the raft. The Dhamma is not something that can be understood through theory alone, but requires direct experience. This involves cultivating mindfulness and awareness of one's thoughts, feelings, and actions.
- Having a skilled teacher (*kalyanamitta*) who possesses a deep understanding of the Dhamma can be an invaluable guide on the path towards enlightenment. They can provide guidance, answer questions, and help students overcome obstacles.
- Studying and reflecting on the Dhamma (*pariyatti patipatti*) is also vital for deepening one's understanding. This involves reading the sutras, attending dharma talks, and reflecting on the teachings.
- Finally, developing a deep understanding of the Dhamma requires patience and perseverance (*khanti adhiṭṭhāna*). It is a lifelong journey that involves overcoming obstacles and developing wisdom and insight over time.

The Buddha's Water Snake analogy, found in the *Alagaddupama Sutta* of the Majjhima Nikaya in the Pali Canon, presents a powerful metaphor for understanding the Buddha's teachings on suffering, its causes, and the path to liberation. The analogy compares the Buddha to a man who helps a group of people suffering from the poisonous bite of a water snake. The man first helps the people by getting rid of the venom in their bodies, but then goes on to teach them how to avoid getting bitten in the future.

This analogy emphasizes the Buddha's role as a compassionate teacher and guide, providing a powerful tool to help individuals achieve enlightenment and liberation from the cycle of suffering. The poisonous snake in the analogy represents suffering, and the people who have been bitten represent all sentient beings who are subject to suffering during the cycle of their lives until death and the occurrence of the next birth. The Buddha's first action, getting rid of the venom, represents the Buddha's teachings on how to eliminate the causes of suffering, such as the three poisons of greed, hatred, and ignorance.

The second action, teaching the people how to avoid getting bitten in the future, represents the Buddha's teachings on the path to liberation, which includes the Noble Eightfold Path and other practices that lead to the end of suffering. The ultimate goal of the Buddha's teachings is to achieve Nibbana, the "blowing out of the causes of suffering," and the Buddha's compassionate nature and desire to help all beings find freedom from suffering is emphasized through this analogy.

The teachings of the Buddha are seen as only a means to an end, because they are designed to help individuals attain enlightenment and liberation from the cycle of suffering. The goal of the Dhamma is to lead individuals to a state of awakening, where they develop wisdom, compassion, and understanding. The teachings of the Buddha are not an end in themselves, but rather a means to achieve this end.

Once an individual has reached a state of awakening, they are no longer bound by the causes of suffering, and their understanding of the world has fundamentally changed. They have gained a deep understanding of the nature of reality and their place in it, and have developed the wisdom and compassion necessary to lead a truly fulfilling life. The teachings are no longer necessary once an individual has achieved this state because the teachings have already achieved their purpose.

The "Water Snake" analogy is a powerful tool for understanding the Buddha's teachings on suffering, its causes, and the path to liberation. The Buddha's teachings are only a means to an end and are designed to help individuals achieve enlightenment and liberation from the cycle of suffering. The teachings are not an end in themselves, but rather a tool to achieve this end. Once an individual has achieved a state of awakening, the teachings are no longer necessary, because the individual has fundamentally changed, and has gained a deep understanding of the nature of reality and their place in it.

Clinging to the Illusion of Being a Buddhist

In his book (*Appendix I, pp. 177-182*), Bhante Punnaji discusses verse 254 of the Dhammapada. In most translations, this verse is rendered as follows:

"All beings take delight in fetters (i.e., craving, pride and wrong view) that prolong samsara (the cycle of suffering); all the Buddhas are free from these fetters." Bhante Punnaji renders this verse as follows: "...ordinary people are fond of speculating, theorizing, asking questions and answering them, seeking knowledge as concepts, and modifying them."

In his commentary regarding the meaning of this text, Bhante Punnaji further states:

*"The Buddha's awakening was not the grasping of a **concept** and announcing, "I discovered the truth." **Buddha emptied his mind of all concepts**, including knowledge, and stilled his mind, which was the perfect serenity of mind that could not be disturbed or agitated again. To achieve that state, **he gave up concepts and dependence on concepts**...there was a complete inner transformation. That is what awakening means.*

All that we know are concepts. The Buddha pointed out that there is no reality other than concepts. The only reality is the concept. And this is something people don't like to accept. He says that if there is any person who claims there is a reality other than concepts, he can be questioned and cross-questioned, and ultimately, he won't be able to make good his boast (Samyutta Nikaya 35.23). The Buddha appoints out that concepts are the things that create our problems. Concepts are not present as just concepts; they turn into emotions. All the problems in the world are the result of concepts."

I agree with Bhante Punjabi's comments regarding "concepts." An inexhaustible problem that has existed in the World, if not *the most* inexhaustible problem, has been that of the concept of religion. Wars, death, destruction, impediments to knowledge, and ignorance about the human experience, have resulted because of the differences in the concept of "religion." It is this human proclivity to attach to concepts that creates all the problems of the World. In a lecture conducted in New York, presented by CFI-Metro New York and cosponsored by the New York Society for Ethical Culture,²²⁵ author and neuroscientist, Sam Harris stated:

"There's a taboo here that has already begun casting a shadow over our conversation, and I want to make it explicit before violating it. It is taboo in our society (not considered ethically proper) to criticize a person's religious faith. It's taboo even to notice the differences among our religions. It's taboo, for instance, to even notice that certain religions lead to violence in a way that others don't. Certain religious doctrines promulgate violence."

Harris is talking about religious doctrine, and religious doctrines are concepts. And it is, as Bhante Punjabi says:

"Clinging to concepts will perpetuate the emotions...Awakening is letting go of concepts, not grasping another concept, and saying this is true and everything else is false (P.179)."

So, the problem with the created concepts of modern Buddhism, is that these recently created concepts have altered or adulterated the original teachings of the Buddha. The Buddha focused exclusively on how suffering arises, and how it ends; no more and no less. As Bhante Punjabi states:

"The discovery of this problem and its solution is called Awakening. Normally, we are asleep because we take these concepts as reality, and we have closed our minds to other things (p.180)."

Is not the Bhante saying that for a student of the Buddha to cling to conventional concepts, such as "religion," prevents awakening? The reality of awakening is only accessible when one clearly knows the difference between eliminating one position only to grasp onto another. It is the "giving up of," rather than "holding onto" concepts when awakening is possible. Awakening means that one is able to see the truth about the nature of conventional reality, which in itself, is instrumental in seeing the true nature of reality. Normal we accept things as conventional reality, the everyday stuff. What the World accepts about the concept of religion, is what Bhante Punjabi was talking about when he commented on verse 254 of the Dhammapada? [*All beings take delight in fetters (i.e., craving, pride and wrong view) that prolong samsara; all the Buddhas are free from these fetters.*]

²²⁵ "The End of Faith" Harris, Sam, *Lecture* Src: <https://youtu.be/sQuDWt9qmBs>

Further in his commentary, Bhante Punnnaji states that it is “concepts” that are the creator; that the whole world is created in the mind (p.181). Furthermore, Buddha’s analogy of the Elephant and the blind men illustrates this perfectly. Each blind man touches a different part of an elephant, and each one develops a mental image of what an elephant looks like. While their individual experiences were true; their experience was isolated and confined to the part of the elephant that they had touched. Their concepts of what an elephant differed tremendously. Arguments and quarrelling ensued whereby they ended up fighting one another. Is this not the same result of grasping onto different concepts of religion? Bhante Punnnaji states:

*“The point of this story is that the unilateral view of experience not only limits one’s vision it **also creates conflict and undermines love and understanding**, and therefore, defeats the very purpose of religion.”*

Learning to identify the concepts that we cling to are the tools we use for building our Dhamma raft. Recognizing the concepts that we cling to is crucial for building that raft. Our beliefs and opinions are made of concepts, and we can use the Four Noble Truths to identify which concepts cause suffering. We can gradually abandon these concepts and achieve a gradual stage of awakening. Those who feel their practice lacks progress should question their motivation. You should ask yourself “*Why am I doing this?*” If you can ask that question than you might want to examine whether or not you are merely *around* Buddhism; only making the minimal effort to practice the Dhamma or meditate, then perhaps you are stuck in what I call *the hobbyist mode* of practice.

Present forms of Buddhism become a hobby or mere entertainment when it is something that you are around and that you use in order to feel good about yourself. You participate in Buddhist-like things because it makes you feel good, and you think that you really are doing something beneficial for yourself, kind of like listening to soothing Tibetan flute music or monks chanting. This provides you with some level of comfort, no different really than wolfing down some sugar-loaded food or having that Scotch neat. However, you are aware that your concentration level is practically nil when you are meditating, and you fuss about not being able to meditate. When you are at a retreat or Dhamma talk, most of what is being said you don’t really understand, but you shake your head in agreement anyway.

The Buddha taught that the Dhamma can only be truly understood through direct experience and practice, not just through exposure or proximity. Therefore, merely being “around” Buddhism without actively engaging in the practice is unlikely to lead to any changes, let alone profound transformation or realization of the teachings.

The Buddha himself emphasized the importance of putting the teachings into practice, and he encouraged his followers to develop their own wisdom and insight through meditation and contemplation. In fact, one of the core aspects of the Noble Eightfold Path, which forms the foundation of Dhamma practice, is *right effort* (*samma vayama*). This means making a diligent effort to develop wholesome habits and abandon unwholesome ones, and this can only be achieved through consistent and sustained practice. Therefore, while exposure to Dhamma talks, and meditation may be a helpful starting point, it is ultimately the practice that leads to true understanding and transformation. The Buddha's opinion would likely be that those who are content with merely being "around" Buddhism are missing out on the profound benefits of the teachings, and are not fully realizing their potential for liberation from suffering.

The following are just a few examples, as there are many suttas throughout the Buddhist canon that emphasize the importance of active practice and direct experience of the teachings. Following are a few Dhamma suttas that speak to the importance of active practice and direct experience of the teachings:

The Kalama Sutta (AN 3.65) - This sutta emphasizes the importance of personal investigation and discernment in understanding the truth, rather than relying on hearsay or tradition. The Buddha encourages the Kalamas to practice the teachings for themselves and see the benefits in their own lives.

The Satipatthana Sutta (MN 10) - This sutta outlines the Buddha's instructions on the practice of mindfulness meditation, which is a foundational practice in Buddhism. The sutta emphasizes the importance of developing direct awareness of one's own mind and body, and using this awareness to gain insight into the nature of reality.

The Anapanasati Sutta (MN 118) - This sutta teaches the Buddha's instructions on the practice of mindfulness of breathing, which is another foundational practice in Buddhism. The sutta emphasizes the importance of sustained and diligent practice, and describes the benefits that can be gained through this practice.

The Dhammacakkavattana Sutta (SN 56.11) - This sutta contains the Buddha's first sermon, in which he outlines the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. The sutta emphasizes the importance of actively engaging in the practice in order to attain liberation from suffering.

The Religion Marketplace

Commodification of the Buddha's Teachings

One of the most unwholesome and salacious effects of the Westernization of the Buddha's teachings is known as McMindfulness. Organizations, including those claiming to be "Buddhist," have corrupted the Buddha's teaching of mindfulness, offering mindfulness instruction for the purpose of promoting efficiency, improving production, and making sales instead of self-awakening or enlightenment, which also reinforces the Western ethic of profit-over-people.



The term "McMindfulness" is a pejorative term that is sometimes used to criticize the way mindfulness has been popularized and commercialized in modern Western society. The term is a play on words, suggesting that the mindfulness practices being promoted by some individuals and organizations have been stripped of their depth and spiritual roots, and are being packaged and sold in a quick and superficial way, similar to how fast food is sold by McDonald's.

"McMindfulness" is often used to critique the commodification and commercialization of mindfulness, as well as the way in which it has been divorced from its original Buddhist context and stripped of its ethical dimensions. Critics argue that "McMindfulness" promotes a superficial and individualistic approach to well-being, without addressing the broader social, economic, and political factors that contribute to stress, suffering, and inequality.

However, it is important to note that not all mindfulness practices or teachers fall into this category, and many individuals and organizations are working to promote mindfulness in a way that is grounded in its original context and ethical dimensions. It is important to engage in mindfulness practices with discernment and to seek out teachers and organizations that are committed to a more authentic and holistic approach to mindfulness.

The prefix "Mc" is used to evoke the fast food chain McDonald's, implying that mindfulness has been reduced to a shallow and mass-produced form that has lost touch with its original purpose and depth. Critics argue that this commodification of mindfulness leads to a diluted and superficial understanding of the practice, and that it is being used to justify and reinforce existing power structures and oppressive systems. This term is also used to highlight the dangers of this trend and to call for a more authentic and meaningful approach to mindfulness practices.

The "McMindfulness" industry has profited to the tidy sum of over \$200 billion in the last ten years. There are even "mindfulness" apps where one can purchase subscriptions accessible through a cell phone. The two biggest meditation apps, Headspace and Calm, each make more than \$50 million in revenue each year through their guided meditation subscription services.²²⁶ Such methods, absent of the knowledge gained through the Four Noble Truths, leads to nothing and nowhere, outside of perhaps purchasing a moment of relaxation. Bhikkhu Bodhi, and American monk of the Theravada school, states that;

"Absent a sharp social critique, Dhamma practices could easily be used to justify and stabilize the status quo, becoming a reinforcement of consumer capitalism."

A plethora of books, magazine articles, Internet blogs and talk-shows, are offered around the world, peddling mindfulness as a cure-all solution for the everyday problems of human beings.²²⁷ This, it would seem, reinforces Bhikkhu Bodhi's prediction.

*"Gurus talk about 'the competitive advantage of meditation.' Pupils come to see it as a way to get ahead in life. And the point of the whole exercise is lost. What has parading around in pricey Lululemon outfits got to do with the Buddhist ethic of non-attachment to material goods? And what has staring at a computer-generated dot got to do with the ancient art of meditation? Western capitalism seems to be doing rather more to change eastern religion than eastern religion is doing to change Western capitalism."*²²⁸

²²⁶ **McMindfulness:** Src: <https://medium.com/@marcodpatricio/how-mindfulness-became-a-billion-dollar-industry-61acb50fd436>

²²⁷ **Mindful America:** Src: <https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199827817.001.0001/acprof-9780199827817>

²²⁸ **Mindfulness Business:** Src: <https://www.economist.com/business/2013/11/16/the-mindfulness-business>

The term "McMindfulness" is used to criticize the way in which mindfulness practices have been commercialized and stripped of their depth and ethical dimensions, resembling the superficiality and quickness of fast food. This trend, which promotes an individualistic approach to well-being without addressing broader social, economic, and political factors, has resulted in the \$200 billion mindfulness industry. While not all mindfulness practices fall under this category, it is important to seek out teachers and organizations that promote a more authentic and holistic approach. Profit-driven methods, devoid of the understanding gained through the Four Noble Truths, offer nothing beyond momentary relaxation. The prefix "Mc" implies the commodification of mindfulness reinforces existing power structures and oppressive systems, while a more meaningful approach would address the root causes of stress, suffering, and inequality.

The Western Buddhist Hobbyist

The original Buddha Dhamma, which is taught and preserved in the Pali texts, is indeed not a religion in the modern conventional sense. Rather, it is a system of philosophical, psychological and ethical teachings aimed at helping individuals attain liberation from suffering.

When Buddhism spread to different parts of the world, including China, Korea, and Japan, it encountered different cultural and religious traditions, which influenced how the Dhamma was practiced and understood. In particular, the Mahayana form of Buddhism, which emerged in India around the first century CE, roughly 483 years after the Buddha's death, and spread to East Asia, emphasized the importance of devotion to the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas, as well as the use of ritual and devotional practices to support religious-like spiritual progress.

As Mahayana Buddhism spread to other parts of the world, it often became enmeshed with local cultural and religious traditions, such as Taoism and Confucianism in China or Shintoism in Japan. This led to the development of a complex religious-like culture that included temples, shrines, and other ritual and devotional practices.

As Buddhism spread to different parts of the world, it encountered different cultural and religious traditions, which influenced how the Dhamma was practiced and understood. Over time, these cultural and religious influences became fused with the teachings of the Buddha, resulting in a more religion-like form of Buddhism. This form of Buddhism included not only spiritual and ethical teachings, but also rituals, symbols, and other elements typically associated with religion. Monastic institutions and hierarchies became associated with this form of religionized form of Buddhism and were often supported by the patronage of ruling elites and wealthy donors.

In the West, cultural and religious influences further compounded the concept of Buddhism as a religion with Western social and political ideologies, which have led to the perception that Buddhism is a chic social statement or alternative lifestyle choice. This perception has been reinforced by the use of symbols and practices in popular culture and consumer products. However, it is important to remember that the Dhamma taught by the Buddha is a deep and complex system with a rich philosophy, and should not be reduced to a mere fashion statement or anti-establishment political statement.

While the Theravada form of Buddhism continues to emphasize the original teachings of the Buddha and eschews many of the ritual and devotional practices associated with Mahayana Buddhism, it is the Mahayana form of Buddhism that has had the most influence on how Buddhism is understood and practiced in much of the world today. As a result, the idea of Buddhism as a religion is largely a product of the development and spread of Mahayana Buddhism and its long history of fusion with local cultural and religious traditions.

The Mahayana form of Buddhism emphasizes the idea of the Bodhisattva, an enlightened being who is committed to helping others achieve enlightenment. This concept has had a significant impact on how Buddhism is practiced and understood, particularly in the West.

One way in which Mahayana Buddhism contributes to the perception of Buddhism as a hobby or fashion statement is by emphasizing the idea of the "lay Bodhisattva." In Mahayana Buddhism, lay practitioners are encouraged to embody the qualities of the Bodhisattva and work for the benefit of all beings, even if they do not live as monastics or devote their lives to Dhamma practice. While this idea can be empowering and inclusive, it can also be interpreted in a way that allows people to adopt the label of "Buddhist" without fully committing to the rigorous Dhamma practices that liberation from suffering and awakening requires.

Another way in which Mahayana Buddhism contributes to the perception of Buddhism as a hobby is by placing a greater emphasis on compassion and social engagement. While this is certainly a positive aspect, it can also be interpreted in a way that downplays the importance of the Dhamma, rigorous meditation and ethical practice in favor of social and political activism. This can lead to a situation where people adopt the label of "Buddhist" as a way to signal their commitment to social justice, without necessarily engaging in the deeper spiritual work that the Buddha's original teachings require.

While the Mahayana form of Buddhism has many positive aspects and has contributed greatly to the development and spread of its form of Buddhism, its emphasis on the lay Bodhisattva and social engagement can sometimes be interpreted in a way that downplays the importance of rigorous practice and allows people to adopt the label of "Buddhist" without fully committing to the actual teachings and practices.

Why it is that many Westerners identify as Buddhists is because it is viewed as a chic hobby, which I suspect is due to the shallowness and superficiality of modern Western culture. As with so many aspects of modern Western life, religion and spirituality have become commodified and commercialized, reduced to a mere fashion statement or trendy accessory to be consumed and discarded at will.

Buddhism, with its emphasis on mindfulness and meditation, has become a particularly popular choice for those seeking to cultivate an air of sophistication or spirituality without actually engaging in the serious practice taught by the Buddha. In this sense, Buddhism has become a sort of consumer product, marketed as a lifestyle brand or aspirational ideal for the self-improvement and personal growth industries.

It is also possible that the historical and cultural distance between Buddha and Western societies has contributed to the perception of Buddhism as a chic hobby. The exoticism and mystique surrounding Eastern spirituality, as well as the associations with counterculture movements and new age spirituality, have contributed to a romanticized and often superficial understanding of Buddhism among Westerners. The trend of Westerners treating Buddhism as a chic hobby is a symptom of a larger cultural phenomenon, wherein the deep and complex spiritual traditions of the world are reduced to mere commodities or lifestyle brands to be consumed and discarded at will. It is a disservice to the rich philosophical heritage of the Buddha's teachings, as well as to the human potential for personal growth and mental transformation.

Many Westerners who claim to be Buddhists and do so for the aforementioned reasons, are missing the mark of what the Buddha actually taught because they have not fully understood the core principles of the the Buddha's teachings. I am critical of the supernatural and mystical elements of Mahayana Buddhism, and argue that these beliefs are not essential to the core principles of the Dhamma. Instead, the emphasis should be placed on the importance of mindfulness and meditation as practices that can help individuals cultivate greater awareness, compassion, and insight into the nature of their own minds and the world around them, rather than promoting these things as external forms of relaxation or "feel-good" exercises.

Many Westerners who identify as Buddhists are more interested in the external trappings of the outward expression of the Mahayana form of Buddhism, such as the use of symbols or the adoption of a particular lifestyle, than in the actual practice of meditation and contemplation. In my view, this approach misses the point of what the Buddha actually taught and fails to provide the transformative insights that are possible through a serious engagement with the core principles of the Dhamma.

The trend of Westerners treating Buddhism as a chic hobby over the last several decades is a symptom of a larger cultural phenomenon, wherein the deep and complex traditions of the Dhamma are reduced to mere commodities or lifestyle brands.

I would also argue that a serious engagement with the core principles of the Dhamma, including mindfulness and meditation, provides valuable insights into the nature of the mind and the truth about the nature of reality, which helps individuals lead more compassionate and fulfilling lives while advancing closer to the attainment of a mental awakening and release from their suffering.

There are several theories as to why modern Westerners become attached to entertaining distractions and hobbies to insulate themselves from the reality of life. One theory is that modern Western society is highly individualistic, which leads people to seek out activities that provide personal enjoyment and fulfillment. Technology has made it easier than ever to access and consume entertainment, leading to a culture of constant stimulation and distraction. Modern life is stressful and overwhelming, and people use distractions and hobbies as a way to cope with the demands of daily life.

As for the popularity of Buddhism in the West, I argue that it is not actually a part of a broader trend towards spiritual seeking and self-improvement. Buddhism offers a set of activities that can help individuals garner some respite from the demands of modern living, and anything that can provide such respite is highly valued in modern Western society. Additionally, the exoticism and mystique of Buddhism appeals to Westerners who are searching for something outside of their own culture and experience.

Many years ago, I bought an Italian Trattoria in San Francisco with the intent of being its main cook. The man I purchased it from was born in Genoa Italy. He taught me everything I needed to know about authentic Italian cooking. When I set out to create my first menu, Claudio gave me a valuable tip. "Put the menu items in Italian and put the English translation in small type underneath. Americans love anything exotic. If they can't say it, they will order it." His advice worked.

One scholar who has written extensively on this topic is David McMahan, a professor of religious studies at Franklin and Marshall College. In his book *"The Making of Buddhist Modernism,"* he argues that Buddhism has been adapted and transformed in the West to fit the needs and desires of modern Westerners. He writes:

"Buddhism in the West is not simply a transplant of an ancient Asian religion, but a hybrid creation, a product of the interaction between Asian traditions and Western modernity."

Another scholar who has written about Buddhism and entertainment is James Coleman, a professor of sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles. In his book *"The New Buddhism,"* he argues that Buddhism has become a form of "spiritual consumerism" in the West, where individuals pick and choose from various traditions and practices to create their own personalized form of spirituality. He writes:

"Buddhism in America is a buffet, a consumer item, where people can choose from various cultural expressions, mix and match and create their own spiritual meals."

Is it any wonder why such fervent claims that Buddhism is a religion stems from those associated with the Mahayana form of Buddhism? No such claims, to my knowledge, come from those associated with the Theravada school. Western Mahayana Buddhists, I believe, unwittingly adopt this position, not based on knowledge of the Dhamma, but because they themselves are a product of Western ideology, and so, contribute to the "idea" that Buddhism is a religion. Am I stating that they are wrong to do so? No, I am not. In reality, I just don't think they know any better. This is a clear example of standing among the trees without being able to see the forest.

Why Does it Matter Whether Buddhism is a Religion or Not?

Religionized Buddhism & the Religionization of the Dhamma

In the Buddha's teachings, there are numerous instances where he warned against clinging to views. When considering whether Buddhism is a religion, the very question assumes that it is important, but from a standpoint of equanimity, it may not be. The answer rests on one's definition of religion. However, this is purely a philosophical debate. In his essay "Killing the Buddha," author Sam Harris expresses his disappointment that: *"The wisdom of the Buddha is trapped within the religion of Buddhism."* Despite acknowledging that *"The wisdom of the Buddha is the greatest source of contemplative knowledge that any civilization has produced,"* Harris argues that this ancient wisdom is being distorted by so-called modern Buddhists, who are forcing it into a modern, pre-packaged form. The point that he is making, despite the fact that *"The wisdom of the Buddha is the richest source of contemplative wisdom that any civilization has produced"* is that Buddha's wisdom, known today as Buddhism, is mired by the practices and dogma of so-called Buddhists, who force this ancient wisdom into a kind of prefabricated modern McBuddhist package.

The religionization of the Buddha's teachings refers to the process by which Buddhism has evolved into a formalized religion with institutions, rituals, and hierarchies. This process has taken place over the course of many centuries, and has involved the adaptation and *integration of the Buddha's original teachings into a variety of cultural and historical contexts.*

One example of the religionization of Buddhism is the development of monasticism. The Buddha himself established a community of monks and nuns who lived according to a set of rules and practices, but over time this community became more formalized and institutionalized, with the creation of monastic orders, the development of specific monastic codes and rituals, and the establishment of hierarchies of authority.

Another example is the development of Buddhist art and iconography. Over time, the Buddha and other enlightened beings came to be depicted in a variety of artistic forms, ranging from statues and paintings to mandalas and other symbolic representations. These artistic representations have played an important role in the *religious imagination* of Buddhists, mostly within the Mahayana form of Buddhism, where it believed such art helps to convey the Buddha's teachings in a visual and symbolic form. However, these forms of art are specific to the cultures and traditions of Eastern imagination.

A third example is the development of Buddhist commentaries and changes to the original texts that recorded the Buddha's teachings. Over time, the Buddha's original teachings were recorded and compiled into a vast corpus of texts, which were then elaborated upon and interpreted by later generations of scholars and practitioners. This process has resulted in a rich and complex body of literature that has played an important role in the development of modern concepts of Buddhist doctrine and practice, but are not considered to be authentic teachings of the Buddha.

The religionization of Buddhism has been a convoluted and multifarious process, involving the adaptation and amalgamation of the Buddha's original teachings into different cultural and historical contexts. This process has contributed to the diversity and richness of modern Buddhist traditions but has also raised queries about the relationship between the Buddha's teachings and the cultural and institutional forms that have grown around them.

In recent times, Sam Harris has argued that Buddhism would benefit from being disassociated from those who claim to follow the Buddha's teachings. While the original teachings of the Buddha do not align with the conventional definition of religion, the institutionalization and organization of Buddhism, particularly in the West, does indeed fit this definition, especially in the case of Mahayana Buddhism. Hence, the religionization of the Buddha's teachings has been a gradual and intricate process, shaped by various historical, cultural, and social factors over many centuries. Following are some specific events and factors that have contributed to the religionization of the Buddha's teachings:

1. The patronage of kings and rulers, even in modern times. Buddhism has been closely linked with political power throughout its history. Kings and rulers have often provided patronage and support to Buddhist institutions, and in some cases have played a key role in the spread of Buddhism. However, this patronage has also led to the development of a complex relationship between Buddhism and political power, with the potential for abuse of authority on both sides.
2. The influence of cultural and historical factors: various forms of Buddhism have been shaped by a variety of cultural and historical factors, including the cultural traditions of the regions where it has spread, the influence of other religions and philosophical traditions, and historical events such as wars and migrations.

These factors have contributed to the diversity and complexity of Buddhist traditions and have played a significant role in the religionization of Buddhism. Specific historical events that contributed to the religionization of the Buddha's teachings are:

- **The Fourth Buddhist Council** (1st century BCE): This council was convened by King Ashoka to standardize and organize the Buddha's teachings, which resulted in the creation of the Pali Canon, which is still used as a central text in Theravada Buddhism. More than any other historical event tied to the religionization of the Buddha's teachings was the creation of the Mahayana form of Buddhism (1st century BCE - 1st century CE). This movement emerged in India as a reformist movement that sought to expand the scope of the Buddha's teachings and make them accessible to a wider audience. Mahayana Buddhism introduced new concepts such as the Bodhisattva ideal, and placed a greater emphasis on the role of compassion in Dhamma practice, and although these things were certainly taught by the Buddha, he did not give emphasis to either.
- **Patronage of Buddhist Kings and Rulers** (3rd century CE onwards): Throughout Buddhist history, kings and rulers have played a significant role in the religionization of Buddhism by providing patronage to monasteries and Buddhist institutions, commissioning Buddhist art and architecture, and supporting the spread of Buddhism through their political power.
- **Development of Buddhist Scholasticism** (5th century CE onwards): This movement arose in India as a response to the challenges posed by rival philosophical schools, and it resulted in the development of new commentarial literature and complex philosophical systems.
- **Spread of Buddhism to East Asia** (1st century CE onwards): As the Mahayana form of Buddhism spread to China, Korea, and Japan, it encountered a range of cultural and philosophical traditions, which influenced the way the Dhamma was practiced and understood. This resulted in the development of new schools of Buddhism, such as Chan (Zen) Buddhism in China and Japan.

Understanding the Buddha's stance on clinging to views, whether the Buddha's teachings are considered religious or philosophical in nature is ultimately irrelevant, as what matters most is the direct experience and realization of the teachings in one's own life. The Buddha himself emphasized the importance of practical application and personal investigation of the teachings, rather than blind acceptance of dogma or doctrine. Buddha's teachings are focused on practical application and direct experience, rather than abstract philosophy or religious dogma.

The Buddha encouraged his followers to test the teachings for themselves and to rely on their own experience and discernment, rather than simply accepting them on faith. After all is said and done, even within the pages of this book, the question of whether his teachings are religious or philosophical ends up being merely a matter of personal bias.

To argue that all faith-based religions share the same objective as Buddhism, such as transcending the self, is misleading. While the goal of transcendence may be similar on some level, the approach differs greatly. While all religions strive for transcendence, the path towards it in the Dhamma is vastly different from the conceptual transcendence found in faith-based religions.

The Buddha's teachings on transcending the self differ greatly from those of faith-based religions. While the Dhamma provides a path for achieving transcendence in one's lifetime, faith-based religions rely on divine favor for transcendence after death. The Buddha's teachings emphasize the need to understand and overcome the delusion of the self, a concept not addressed by faith-based religions. The religionization of the Buddha's teachings has resulted in the embrace of ideas and concepts that were not taught by the Buddha, such as the veneration of the Buddha as a cult figure. This goes against the Buddha's teachings and is not in line with the principles of the Dhamma. Faith-based religions are characterized by their realm of concepts, ideas, and dogma, and any representation of the Buddha's teachings that remains fixed in such a realm, including wrong views not taught by the Buddha, is not truly representative of the Dhamma. Specifically illustrate the differences between the Buddha's teachings on the transcendence of the self and the teachings of faith-based religions:

- **Anatta-lakkhana Sutta** (SN 22.59) - This sutta teaches that the self is a temporary and illusory construct, arising from the interplay of various mental and physical factors. It emphasizes the impermanence and interdependence of all phenomena, including the self.
- **Kalama Sutta** (AN 3.65) - This sutta emphasizes the importance of personal investigation and discernment in understanding the truth, rather than relying on hearsay or tradition. It encourages the listener to rely on their own experience and discernment, rather than blind faith.

We can see the stark difference of emphasis between the Buddha's teachings and Christian texts in the following:

John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that *whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*" This verse emphasizes the importance of belief in Jesus as the path to salvation.

Ephesians 2:8-9 - "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and *this is not from yourselves*, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast." This passage emphasizes the importance of faith and belief in God's grace as the means of salvation, rather than personal effort or realization.

Romans 10:9 - "If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, *you will be saved*." This verse emphasizes the importance of confession of faith and belief in the resurrection of Jesus as the path to salvation.

Overall, these texts illustrate the differences between the Buddha's teachings on the transcendence of the self, which emphasize the impermanence and interdependence of all phenomena, and the teachings of faith-based religions, which emphasize the importance of belief in a divine being or religious figure as the means of salvation. The Buddha's teachings encourage personal investigation and discernment, rather than blind faith, as the path to liberation from suffering.

Western Mahayana Buddha-ists Keep Misperceptions Alive

Those who consider or claim that the Buddha's teachings are a religion impose Western religious concepts onto them that were never taught by the Buddha, but which misrepresents the central teachings causing confusion and misunderstandings about the nature of existence, rebirth, kamma, Nibbana, self, dukkha, and the Buddha himself. One example of confusion surrounds the concept of emptiness. Contrary to popular belief, the concept of emptiness (*suññata*-Pali) (*shunyata*-Sanskrit) does not mean that nothing exists, but rather that things have no inherent, intrinsic, or essential existence apart from anything else.

The Buddha taught that upon examination of the true nature of existence, one realizes how things exist and that everything, including beings and physical phenomena, are impermanent and lacks a permanent nature. This is different from religion, which asserts that everything exists because of a supernatural being's purposeful will and is therefore infinite in nature.

Furthermore, the idea that everything is One and that individuals and physical phenomena are part of a single entity is also not a teaching of the Buddha. Religion emphasizes the existence of a self, embodied in the concept of a human soul, that is responsible for moral behavior and subject to judgment by a supernatural being after death. However, human beings and physical phenomena are not part of a larger entity. Additionally, the belief in a human soul leads to confusion between the Buddha's teaching of rebirth and the Hindu concept of reincarnation. The notion that a soul migrates from one being to another after death is not supported by the Buddha's teachings.

According to Theravada scholar Rahula Walpola, "*The person who dies here and is reborn elsewhere is neither the same person nor another.*" A new life means a physical body that is influenced by an existing kammic profile. It is the stream of consciousness of the kammic profile that goes on to experience a new round or cycle of birth, old age, sickness and death. In Buddhism, the energy or imprint created by one's actions in a previous life, known as kamma, influences and shapes the stream of consciousness.

This stream of consciousness is then reborn into another being upon birth, but this does not represent the same person. A person's genetic profile means only that the new human may have some of the characteristics of the parents, but the new life is not the parent and can never be the parent.

Another confusion, which is contrary to popular belief, is that Buddhists are required to follow a vegetarian diet. While some Buddhist sects promote vegetarianism, it is ultimately a personal decision and not a mandatory aspect of the Buddha's teachings. In fact, the earliest Pāli texts reveal that the Buddha himself consumed meat, and even advised monks to eat meat if it was offered to them, as long as the animal was not killed specifically for the purpose of feeding the monks.

Additionally, the concept of kamma or karma in Sanskrit, is often misunderstood to be determinism or fate. However, kamma is nothing more than the voluntary actions one takes resulting in either a beneficial outcome or not. The word "kamma" itself is a transliteration of the Pāli word for "action." Thus, kamma refers to the actions one takes, *not the consequences of those actions*. As individuals have the ability to change their intentions that influence their actions, their kamma is not set in stone and so can be altered. The future is not predetermined, but the characteristics of the future is dependent on one's actions now. Contrary to popular belief, the Buddha did not teach that kamma is a form of punishment for bad behavior or a system of cosmic justice meted out by a supernatural judge.

To metaphorically describe the concept of kammic force from nature is to think of it as the law of cause and effect. Just as every action in nature has consequences, so too does every intentional action that a person takes. For example, when a farmer plants a seed, the quality of the soil, the amount of water, and the care given to the plant will all affect the growth and yield of the crop. Similarly, when a person intentionally acts with wholesome or unwholesome intentions, the consequences of those actions will shape their future *experiences* and *opportunities*.

Another way to think of kammic force is to imagine throwing a pebble into a pond. The force of the throw creates ripples that spread out in all directions, affecting the surface of the water and the surrounding environment. Similarly, every intentional action creates a ripple effect that can influence not only the individual, but also their relationships, community, and even the world at large.

In nature, small actions can have significant and long-lasting consequences. The accumulation of wholesome or unwholesome kammic imprints over time can shape the quality and conditions of one's life, and even influence the type of rebirth one may experience in future lives.

Ultimately, the concept of kammic force can be seen as a natural law that operates according to cause and effect. Just as every action in nature has consequences, so too do our intentional actions shape our present and future experiences.

Another common misunderstanding is the belief that enlightenment or Nibbana (Nirvana-Sanskrit) is a permanent state of happiness. While the term 'enlightenment' is sometimes used to describe the meaning of Nibbana, the Buddha's teachings indicate that Nibbana is a stage of awakening achieved through extinguishing the fires of greed, hatred, and delusion, leading to the end of suffering.

Even the most awakened individuals still live in the world and experience everyday challenges, just as Zen scholar Barbara O'Brien notes that... *"Even the most awakened teachers are not floating around in a cloud of bliss. They still live in the world, ride on buses, catch cold, and run out of coffee sometimes."*

Another widespread misconception about the Buddha's teachings is that life is all about suffering. This misconception arises from a misunderstanding and mistranslation of the First Noble Truth, which states that the reality of human life is that birth brings stress, aging leads to dissatisfaction and stress, death is unwanted and brings suffering and stress, grief and sadness are stressful, physical and mental pain causes stress, misery, anguish, despair and hopelessness are stressful, being with people we don't like is stressful, separation from those we love is stressful, and not getting what we want is stressful. Suffering affects every aspect of our lives. However, this doesn't mean that we should focus solely on suffering or that life is devoid of happiness. In fact, understanding the true meaning of dukkha, or suffering, can greatly reduce its impact and allow us to find happiness in the present moment, despite its impermanence.

Theravada scholar and monk Bhikkhu Bodhi summarizes the focus of the First Noble Truth and dukkha (dissatisfaction and suffering):

This last clause [of the First Noble Truth], referring to a fivefold grouping of all the factors of existence, implies a deeper dimension to suffering than is covered by our ordinary ideas of pain, sorrow, and despondency. What it points to, as the fundamental meaning of the First Noble Truth, is the un-satisfactoriness and radical inadequacy of everything conditioned, owing to the fact that whatever is impermanent and [is] ultimately bound to perish."

Again, I am compelled to ask: "Given all of the information provided thus far, how much of what you have read in this book indicates that the teachings of the Buddha represent religion in the conventional sense?"

Upādāna & the Claim that Buddhism is a Religion

In relation to the Buddha's teachings on clinging is the Pāli term, "*upādāna*," which means "fuel," and refers to the material cause or foundation that sustains and keeps the active process of clinging, grasping, and attachment energized. Holding onto, promoting, or spreading incorrect beliefs about the Buddha's teachings, based solely on one's intellectual and philosophical views (*ditthi*), dogmatically clinging to them, regardless of the facts, is the mental fuel perpetuating what the Buddha called "*miccha ditthi*" (wrong views). With regard to clinging to the idea that Buddhism is a religion, this clinging is not based on a true understanding or knowledge of what is right or wrong, but rather an intentional act of clinging to one's wrong views (*miccha ditthi*). It is the intention that serves as the fuel (*upādāna*). The cause of this intentional clinging is what the Buddha referred to as "*avijjā*," meaning ignorance of the core teachings of the Buddha.

The formation of incorrect views starts with a strong desire to be correct, which is driven by ego and the need to satisfy one's sense of self. This desire leads to craving for validation and the intention to possess this sense of being right, which is tinted by greed. These cravings infiltrate one's thinking and speech (*vaci saṅkhāra*), leading to actions taken to fulfill this desire for correctness (*kāya saṅkhāra*). Essentially, the Buddha explains that one attracts and draws close to themselves things that bring pleasure to their mind. According to the Buddha, one pulls close to oneself the things that one considers to be mind-pleasing (*upa + ādana* = "upa" means "close" and "ādana" means "pull"). *Upādāna* has a close relationship with the concept of *saṅkhāra*.

The Pali word "*saṅkhāra*" can have various meanings depending on the context in which it is used in the texts. In the context of the Dhamma teachings, *saṅkhāra* refers to mental and physical processes that arise from one's own actions, imagination, and thinking, leading to the continuation of the cycle of birth and rebirth (*saṃsāra*). *Saṅkhāra* also encompasses the conditions and experiences that arise from these processes, such as thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations.

The concept of *saṅkhāra* emphasizes the impermanence and interdependent nature of all phenomena, constantly arising and passing away in response to the conditions and causes that give rise to our thoughts, beliefs, and emotions. Understanding *saṅkhāra* is considered essential to achieving the ultimate goal of the Dhamma, which is the end of suffering (*dukkha*). The Buddha also taught the concept of *vaci saṅkhāra*, which refers to the mental formation that arises from the power of speech.

In the Buddha Dhamma, mental formations are one of the components of the mind and play a crucial role in shaping our experiences, thoughts, words, and actions. "*Vaci saṅkhāra*" specifically refers to the mental formations that arise from speech, including our thoughts and beliefs expressed through our words. According to Dhamma teachings, our words can have a significant impact on our mental well-being and the well-being of those around us, so it is important to be mindful of the words we speak and the thoughts and beliefs they express.

The other important concept of the Buddha's teachings is known as *kāya saṅkhāra*. The Pali phrase "*kāya saṅkhāra*" refers to physical actions or bodily behavior as part of the process of mental and emotional formations. In the Buddha's teachings, *kāya saṅkhāra* refers to actions taken by an individual in order to bring about a desired outcome, driven by their thoughts and speech (*vaci saṅkhāra*). This can be seen as part of the larger concept of "*saṅkhāra*," which refers to mental and emotional formations or volitional activities (intentions) that shape one's thoughts, feelings, and actions. According to the Buddha, these mental and emotional formations are driven by craving and ignorance, and lead to suffering and rebirth. The aim of Dhamma practice is to cultivate insight and awareness into the nature of these formations, in order to overcome craving, ignorance, and eventual suffering.

The concept of *miccha ditthi*, or "wrong view," is a central concept of the Dhamma teachings. *Miccha ditthi* refers to a mistaken or distorted understanding of the nature of reality, which leads to unskillful thoughts, speech, and actions. In contrast, *sammā ditthi*, or "right view," refers to a correct understanding of the nature of reality, which is the first step on the Noble Eightfold Path to gain a release from suffering.

Miccha ditthi can take many forms, but some common examples include:

- Belief in a permanent and unchanging self or soul.
- Belief in the effectiveness of rites and rituals as a means of attaining liberation.
- Belief in the superiority of one's own religion or spiritual path over others.
- Belief in the existence of a creator god or divine being who controls the universe.
- Belief in the notion that material possessions and worldly success are the ultimate goals of life.

Predominantly, Buddha emphasized the importance of investigating one's own views and beliefs, and encouraged his followers to test them, rather than blindly accepting either one's own beliefs and opinions or those of others based on blind faith.

As the Kalama Sutta (AN 3.65) states: “Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing, nor upon tradition, nor upon rumor, nor upon what is in a text, nor upon surmise, nor upon an saying, nor upon inaccurate reasoning, nor upon a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over, nor upon another's seeming ability, nor upon the consideration [that], ‘The monk is our teacher.’” In other words, the Buddha encouraged his followers to rely on their own experience and discernment in developing right view.

So then, does it Matter?

For those who fully comprehend the fundamental teachings of impermanence, non-self, and suffering in Buddhism, the question of whether Buddhism is a religion truly becomes irrelevant. For those who have fully comprehended the fundamental teachings of impermanence, non-self, and suffering, the question of whether Buddhism is a religion becomes irrelevant for several reasons.

First, the realization of impermanence, non-self, and suffering is not dependent on any particular religious or philosophical framework. These are universal truths that can be experienced and understood by anyone, regardless of their religious or cultural background.

Second, the Buddha's teachings are focused on practical application and personal investigation, rather than on belief in a particular doctrine or dogma. The emphasis is on developing insight through direct experience and practice, rather than on blind faith, ceremonies, cultural traditions or adherence to religious authorities.

Third, the term "religion" is associated with specific cultural practices and institutions, such as temples, rituals, and hierarchies of religious clergy. While these elements may be present in some modern forms of Buddhism, they are not taught in the Dhamma and are not essential to Dhamma practice. The core of the Buddha's teachings is the development of mindfulness, compassion, and wisdom as a means of attaining liberation from suffering.

Finally, the question of whether Buddhism is a religion is ultimately a semantic one, and has little bearing on actual Dhamma practice or the realization of the truth of the Buddha's teachings. The Buddha's teachings are concerned with the nature of reality and the development of inner peace and happiness, rather than with ideological debates or conceptual frameworks. Therefore, for those who have fully comprehended the fundamental teachings of impermanence, non-self, and suffering in Buddhism, the question of whether Buddhism is a religion becomes irrelevant because the emphasis is not on the framework of what religion is or is not, but on personal investigation and practice, rather than on adherence to a particular religious or philosophical framework. The focus is on developing insight and wisdom, rather than on doctrinal debates or semantic distinctions.

At a higher level of understanding, it becomes clear that the Buddha's teachings do not fit into traditional definitions or the modern conventional meaning of religion. For those who are deeply rooted in the Middle Way and the Noble Eightfold Path, such questions are not only unnecessary, they are superfluous and are treated with detachment and dispassion. However, it is important to acknowledge that there are still many people who have a limited or incorrect understanding of the Buddha Dhamma. Unfortunately, in the West, there are individuals who promote flawed versions of the Buddha's teachings, believing that Buddhism is indeed a religion. This highlights the importance of understanding the essence of the Dhamma and separating it from such misrepresentations and misinterpretations.

The failure of the Buddha's teachings to deliver their intended effects is largely due to the very notion and misunderstanding that his teachings are the basis for what the modern world considers a religion to be. This misperception weakens the core of the Dhamma, causing confusion, and reduces its effectiveness. Therefore, there are instances where it is important to provide clarity on the issue of whether or not the Buddha's teachings can be classified as a religion in order to preserve the true significance and effectiveness of the Dhamma.

As was previously mentioned, it is important to note that most of the people who claim Buddhism to be a religion are usually followers of the Mahayana form of Buddhism or persons who refer to themselves as “non-secular” Buddhists. This distinction is crucial, as not all forms of Buddhism are considered to be a religion in the conventional sense. This misinterpretation is the result of personal biases rather than a deep understanding of the Dhamma. The Theravada school, since the time of the Buddha, has remained committed to preserving the original teachings of the Buddha, and has not incorporated the later additions made by the various forms of Buddhism known as Mahayana. While some followers of the Mahayana tradition may disagree, the Buddha taught that clinging to such things as pride, ego, loyalty, and attachment is a form of attachment to the idea of “self.”

Conclusion

As was discussed earlier, the Buddha's teachings were originally based on an analysis of his own being, his own life and human suffering, which clearly defines the foundational emphasis of those teachings. Applying this Pāli word (*vibhajjavada*)²²⁹ to the Buddha's teachings, was not merely specific, but intentional.

No religion, in the context of the current modern world-view meaning, employs this class or type of analytical specificity. Overall, the intended purpose of the Dhamma is to lead a person away from the mental fog of ignorance and into a state of mental clarity. How, in any conceivable way, does this echo the purpose of what we know to be "religion" in the conventional meaning of the word and concept?

Sam Harris,²³⁰ an American author, philosopher, and neuroscientist, posits that to affix the label of religion onto the Buddha's teachings is not only detrimental, but destructive. In his eye-opening work, titled "*The End of Faith*," Harris states this clearly:

*"Kill the Buddha," says the old kaon. "Kill Buddhism," says Sam Harris, who argues that Buddhism's philosophy, insight, and practices would benefit more people if they were not presented as a religion. The ninth-century Buddhist master Lin Chi is supposed to have said, "If you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him." Like much of Zen teaching, this seems too cute by half, but it makes a valuable point: **to turn the Buddha into a religious fetish is to miss the essence of what he taught**. In considering what Buddhism can offer the world in the twenty-first century, I propose that we take Lin Chi's admonishment rather seriously. As students of the Buddha, we should dispense with Buddhism."*

The statement "*If you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him*" is a well-known kaon in Zen Buddhism, attributed to the Chinese Zen master Lin Chi (Japanese: Rinzai). This statement is not meant to be taken literally, but rather as a metaphorical expression of a deeper teaching. The kaon is meant to challenge the student to transcend all concepts and preconceptions, including the concept of the Buddha as an external figure to be revered or worshiped. In Zen Buddhism, the goal of practice is to directly experience one's own true nature, which is said to be identical with the Buddha nature. Therefore, any concept of the Buddha as an external figure or object to be grasped or attained is seen as a hindrance to realizing one's own true nature.

229 Vibhajja-vada: Pāli: विभज्ज (vibhajja) वद (vada) "Defs: (Vibhajja: "Having divided or analyzed; dividing, analyzing, detailing; in detail "vāda the Vibhajja doctrine, i.e. the doctrine which analyses.") (Vada: "Doctrine: dhamma; dīṭṭhi; vāda true doctrine: sammā dīṭṭhi: theory, the science of disputation; in meaning of theory, disputation; speak: say; [vāda as has developed quite distinctly the specified meaning of an emphatic or formulated speech= assertion or doctrine] 1) Srcs:

https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/Pāli_query.py?qs=vibhajja&searchhws=yes&matchtype=exact | https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/Pāli_query.py?qs=vada&searchhws=yes&matchtype=exact

230 Sam Harris bio: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sam_Harris

The statement "*If you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him*" is meant to shock the listener out of any complacency or attachment to concepts, and to encourage them to directly experience their own Buddha nature, rather than seeking it in external objects or figures. In other words, the kaon is teaching that true enlightenment cannot be found through external objects or concepts, but only through direct experience and realization of one's own true nature. The statement "*kill the Buddha*" is a metaphorical expression of the need to let go of all attachments and concepts, including the concept of the Buddha, in order to directly experience one's own true nature.

To infer or equate the quality or characteristics of "religion" with the teachings of the Buddha, modern-day people attach the suffix "*ism*." However, as Harris states, this conveys false concepts and ideas of the Buddha's teachings.

"So, insofar as we maintain a discourse as 'Buddhists,' we ensure that the wisdom of the Buddha will do little to inform the development of civilization in the twenty-first century."

It is the uniqueness of the Buddha's teachings that allow an individual the opportunity to follow them, to such a degree that they could become a genuine Buddha themselves. This is only possible because of the concept of *vibhajjavāda*, meaning that whatever a practitioner believes, does so with sufficient evidence based on analysis. Evidence based on analysis cannot be produced by any of the teachings of theistic faith-based religions.

As Harris states, the teachings of the Buddha are very much like science:

*"One starts with the hypothesis that using attention in the prescribed way (meditation), and engaging in or avoiding certain behaviors (ethics), will bear the promised result (wisdom and psychological well-being). **This spirit of empiricism (observation) animates Buddhism to a unique degree.** For this reason, the methodology of Buddhism, if shorn of its religious encumbrances, could be one of our greatest resources as we struggle to develop our scientific understanding of human subjectivity."*

Buddha's teachings are uniquely non-religious in nature, and a label, such as "*contemplative science*," rightly describes the methodology ascribed by the Buddha, which reveals not only truths about the nature of the mind and consciousness, but the emptiness and impermanence of the phenomenal world. These teachings are unique to the degree that they clearly stand apart from the doctrines or dogmas of the World's religions. So, categorizing the teachings of the Buddha as religion, destroys its uniqueness, and confuses people, particularly in the West. This weakens the importance of meditation, relegating it to a mere feel-good ritual. Additionally, the label "religion" transmits with it a common distrust, which, I believe, the historical record of the World's religions shows that such distrust is rightly earned.

Once a contemplative path on the Dhamma is fixed, there comes a realization of just how unique the Buddha's teachings are. A follower who has adopted the concept of *vibhajjavāda*; (a path from the viewpoint of analysis), they realize how utterly unlike the teachings of the Buddha are in comparison to the World's faith-based religions. However, as Harris states:

"When Buddhism becomes completely integrated with the concept that it is just another religion, then Buddhist meditation will become synonymous with a failure to assimilate the changes that have occurred in our understanding of the human mind."

In order for the teachings of the Buddha to remain unique, offering genuine truths about the mind and the phenomenal world; I posit that truths such as emptiness, non-self, and impermanence, must not be contaminated by the word "religion," and religious dogmatism, which is the "*ism*," defining the World's religions. Therefore, the Buddha's teachings cannot be trapped, boxed-in and limited by the dogmatic concepts of *Buddhism*. Buddha's teachings, taken as a whole, represents the richest source of contemplative wisdom that any civilization has ever produced. Again, as Sam Harris states:

"In a world that has long been terrorized by fratricidal Sky-God religions, the ascendance of Buddhism would surely be a welcome development. But this will not happen. There is no reason whatsoever to think that Buddhism can successfully compete with the relentless evangelizing of Christianity and Islam. Nor should it try to."

The commercialization and dilution of the Buddha's teachings as a mere feel-good philosophy, similar to what happened to Transcendental Meditation in the 1970s,²³¹ poses a significant threat to the integrity of the Dhamma. Religions tend to breed spiritual complacency, and categorizing the Buddha's teachings as just another religion would result in them losing their distinctiveness and becoming indistinguishable from other religions. The incorporation of religious concepts, despite their direct contradiction with the Buddha's teachings, puts the wisdom and knowledge imparted by the Buddha at risk of being reduced to just another religious belief system. The interest shown by New-Age neopagan groups with some of the Buddha's teachings, leads to the identification of themselves as Buddhist-Christians or Buddhist-Hindus. This is a clear indication of a lack of understanding or knowledge of the teachings of the Buddha Dhamma.

Mixing the teachings of the Buddha with other beliefs to form a hybrid religion causes significant harm to the message of the Buddha and dilutes the benefits of practicing his teachings. The non-dogmatic nature of the Buddha's teachings sets them apart from the world's religions, but it is unfortunately often the Buddhists themselves who create the dogmatic interpretations of Buddhism.

²³¹ **Transcendental Meditation Movement:** Src:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transcendental_Meditation_movement

The teachings of the Buddha risk becoming diluted into a rigid, dogmatic "religion" that bears little resemblance to the Buddha's original message and purpose of the Dhamma. The profound benefits of the Eightfold Noble Path may be replaced with routine, insincere "spiritual" practices of a religious-like nature. A disregard for the meaning behind the teachings may lead people to believe that such things as meditation is only valued for its comforting aspects.

Over time, this could result in a population of self-proclaimed "Buddhists" who are disconnected from the true purpose of the Four Noble Truths. The secularization of the Buddha's teachings, however well-intentioned, carries the danger of limiting people's ability to achieve the ultimate goal of happiness as taught by the Buddha. Combining or merging the Buddha's teachings into a dogmatic "Buddhism" for the sake of easy labeling as a "religion" has the potential to render the teachings banal and commonplace, as is evidenced by the commercialization of the Buddha's teachings of mindfulness in the corporate world.

The term "Buddhism" or any similar phrasing is not found in the original Pāli texts. The Buddha himself rejected such terms that suggest a particular doctrine, theory, system, or practice with a specific character or relationship. He emphasized that he was not just presenting his own ideas or viewpoints, but rather, he was offering guidance on a Path that he himself had experienced. This Path provides a comprehensive outline on how to live a meaningful life, leading to a state of self-awareness and enlightenment.

The term "Buddhism" is believed to have been coined in the early 19th century by European scholars who were studying the religion and culture of India. The earliest known usage of the term "Buddhism" in English can be traced back to a book published in 1801, entitled *"An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul and its Dependencies in Persia, Tartary, and India"* by Mountstuart Elphinstone.

The term "Buddhism" is derived from the name "Buddha," which means "awakened one" or "enlightened one." The Buddha himself did not use the term "Buddhism" to describe his teachings, his methods, practices or his followers, as the religion as we know it today did not exist as a distinct entity during his lifetime. Instead, the Buddha referred to his teachings as the Dhamma, which means "the way things are," or "the truth." The emergence of the term "Buddhism" as a way of referring to the teachings of the Buddha reflects the process of cultural translation that occurred as Buddhism spread beyond its place of origin in ancient India. As the Dhamma encountered different cultures and languages, it was translated and adapted in various ways, and new words and concepts were developed to describe it. The term "Buddhism" thus represents a particular historical and cultural context, but does not represent the Buddha's teachings.

The Buddha taught a Path that leads to the ending of suffering, through a journey of self-discovery and understanding of fundamental truths about the human condition. This Path, known as the Dhamma (the way things are), is comprised of the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Noble Path, and the twelve-fold chain of dependent origination.

The ultimate goal is to reach a state of liberation from ignorance through letting go of attachments, especially to concepts, and realizing the impermanence of all things, with meditation being the foundation for embarking on this Path enabling one to gain a personal understanding of reality through recognizing the constant change and lack of self in all things we experience.

The Path of Dhamma, as taught by the Buddha, offers liberation from the shackles of hate, fear, delusion, ignorance, opinions and beliefs. This path leads to the ultimate realization of freedom from ignorance, which perpetuates the cycle of rebirth, suffering, and death. The enduring relevance of the Buddha's teachings lies in their ability to address the universal human aspiration for freedom from suffering caused by ignorance. These teachings are not based on blind faith, wishful thinking, or dependence on a deity or saints, but are instead grounded in proven effectiveness. It would therefore be beneficial to abandon the labels of "religion" or "non-religion" when discussing the Buddha's teachings and focus solely on their transformative potential.

In my opinion, when asked if Buddhism or the teachings of the Buddha are a religion, the response should be in line with how the Buddha himself answered questions about such existential matters. For example, when asked if the universe was infinite, did he not simply say that knowing such things was *not relevant to solving the problem of human existence*? Is it not similarly irrelevant to one's path of enlightenment whether or not Buddhism is a religion? (See Glossary: *tiracchānagatikā*)

What is the purpose of the claim and the intention behind it? Does it not suggest attachment to a certain viewpoint or concept (*miccha ditthi*)? Just as the Buddha left it up to individuals to determine the answers to certain philosophical questions, the same should be applied to the question of whether the teachings are considered a "religion. There are several reasons why someone might make the claim that the teachings of the Buddha constitute a religion. Some reasons may include:

- **Lack of understanding:** Many people may not have a clear understanding of the teachings of the Buddha and the core concepts of Buddhism, and therefore may view it as a religion.
- **Influence of culture** (*kulaja parivāso* or *kulaja paricayo*): In some cultures, religion is seen as a central aspect of life and spirituality. People may view Buddhism in the same way and classify it as a religion.
- **Personal beliefs** (*attanā ditthi*): Some individuals may have strong beliefs in religion and see Buddhism as a part of this belief system.
- **Familiarity with other religions:** Buddhism shares some similarities with other religions such as ethics, and moral values, and this may lead people to view it as a religion.

- **Historical context:** In some cases, Buddhism has been influenced by additions to the teachings and acculturated forms of Buddhism that mimic faith-based religions, and this may have contributed to the perception that Buddhism is a religion.

It's important to note that the Dhamma is a unique philosophy and practice that cannot be defined as a religion in the traditional or conventional sense. The teachings of the Buddha focus on the path to liberation from ignorance and suffering, and do not rely on the worship of a deity or deities.

Following the Buddha's approach, I am confident that those who truly grasp the teachings and experience their intended impact will comprehend that neither the Buddha's teachings nor methods are religious. The question that arises is why the inclination to classify Buddhism as a religion seems to persist? It is intriguing to note that in Europe, particularly in Sweden, only a small fraction of the population, around 10%, practices or affiliates with any religion at all.

Yet, Sweden is considered one of the happiest countries to live in. Why do you suppose that is? And, while religion is declining in Europe, the situation is quite different in the United States where faith-based religions, at least in word only, appear to be the national attachment. This raises questions about the motivation behind labeling Buddhism as a religion, particularly in the United States.

Therefore, it is my belief that when a nation, like the United States, has a state-sanctioned religion, such as Christianity, a competitive religious environment is created. The tax laws in the U.S. support this notion, as religious organizations are exempt from paying taxes, a feature that so-called Buddhist organizations in the U.S. take advantage of, which further lends to the notion that Buddhism is a religion. For tax purposes and legal identification Buddhism is indeed a religion. Additionally, this competition among religious denominations leads to a religious network that supports the government's philosophy, including its concept of religion. In the case of the United States, the dominant religion is Christianity, and this is reflected in the official currency, which bears the inscription "In God We Trust." The expectation is that the citizens of the nation abide by the government's philosophy, which includes embracing its concept of religion. In connection with this, several lines in a well-known State hymn, "America the Beautiful" are:

"America, America, God shed his grace on thee...America, America, God mend thine every flaw...America, America, May God, thy gold refine...America, America, God shed his grace on thee."

In the United States, that the State religion is “any religion,” is a part of the very fiber of its Democratic Constitutional doctrine. In the United States, freedom of religion is a constitutionally protected right provided in the religion clauses of the First Amendment²³². Therefore, “religion,” in this specific instance, is an accepted part of the social mind of the inhabitants of the State.

The notion that Buddhism is a religion is likely embraced by those who are comfortable with this idea, especially monetarily. Joining the religious competition in the marketplace seems like a logical choice. Western monks and nuns who consider Buddhism as a religion are part of the social mindset of people living in the United States. This notion is not based on a study of knowledge, but rather it stems from the government's policy of promoting religion as a component of its political doctrine and structure. For true students of the Dhamma, all we have is dialogue. If the topic at hand is truth, what relevance does the label of “religion” have? Neither religion nor religious dogma holds a monopoly on truth. Again, to quote Sam Harris:

“To turn the Buddha into a religious fetish is to miss the essence of what he taught. In considering what Buddhism can offer the world in the twenty-first century, I propose that we take Lin Chi’s admonishment rather seriously. As students of the Buddha, we should dispense with Buddhism.”

So, rather than being like; “the ordinary people that are fond of speculating, theorizing, asking questions and answering them, seeking knowledge as concepts, and modifying them to fit their own purposes and beliefs,” the person who grasps the Buddha’s teachings might do well to recall Bhante Punnaji’s words:

“Buddha emptied his mind of all concepts, including knowledge, and stilled his mind, which was the perfect serenity of mind that could not be disturbed or agitated again. To achieve that state, he gave up concepts and dependence on concepts...there was a complete inner transformation. That is what awakening means.”

So, if you are uncertain as to whether or not Buddhism is a religion, I hope this book has helped to clarify the issue in some small way. If you have determined that the Buddha’s teachings do not appear to be a “religion,” then perhaps you will be drawn to venture into his teachings as they were meant to be understood.

Do what you can to help your own circumstances. Do what helps others. Refrain from harming others. Do what you can to transcend your own ignorance, beliefs, opinions, concepts, hate, fear and delusions. For the one who achieves this there is a world of inner peace, understanding and tranquility available to anyone who is determined to experience these things.

²³² **Freedom of Religion in the United States:** Src:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_religion_in_the_United_States

Whether you choose to follow the Theravada school, the Mahayana or Vajrayana traditions, matters little in the scope of the correct purpose for practicing the Dhamma. Rather than becoming attached to a specific form of Buddhism, I strongly recommend just sticking to the Dhamma presented in the original Pali texts. I strongly doubt that the Buddha would be very pleased with the quasi-religio-political divisions of his teachings. There is but one Dhamma. Personally, non-secularist is just as much a division as any other and really only echoes the same concepts espoused by the popular “Moderate” movement.

The popular “Moderate Movement”, does not provide any virtue, particularly with regard to religion. History, which aligns with modern examples, surely reveals that moderation in religion is certainly not a virtue, as it still involves believing in supernatural and irrational concepts without evidence, and that it allows extremists to hide behind a facade of respectability. Moderates, by their very nature, provide cover for the more extreme and dangerous elements of religious belief, and that they are often complicit in perpetuating religious violence and intolerance. The evidence, I believe, show that moderation in religion can actually make it more difficult to combat extremism, as it creates a false equivalence between the views of moderate and extremist believers.

I earlier described proponents of the idea that the Buddha’s teachings consummate them as a religion as cherry-pickers who freely employ anachronism to support their perspectives. These persons are the moderates who cherry-pick from religious texts and ignore the harmful aspects of their beliefs that actually enable their own extremism by providing cover for it under the guise of being something the Buddha taught.

For the most part, I wonder whether it is the moderate religious beliefs and practices that provide a veneer of respectability to what is obviously, and fundamentally, a flawed and harmful system of belief. Moderates are often unwilling to fully confront the problematic aspects of their own and other’s opinions, and are therefore complicit in perpetuating harmful religious ideas and practices.

Now, the reason that I chose to follow the Theravada school is because it is the most unaltered and unadulterated representation of the original teachings of the Buddha. Regardless of whether the Buddha’s teachings are a religion, and whose version of “Buddhism” is correct, there is only one Dhamma. For those whose mission it is to stubbornly cling to the idea that what the Buddha taught is “religion;” who use every form of intellectual magic to prove that the Dhamma is “religion;” who avoid discussions pertaining to anachronism; who misquote the Buddha; who do all of these things out of a sense of self-image for the sole purpose of being right or to give the impression of being an authority on the subject of all things “Buddhist,” there are two suttas containing the Buddha’s words that should be seriously considered:

“Vaṇṇakam, bhikkhave, abhisāṅkhatam vaṇṇakasannidhi-kāra-ṇam
vaṇṇakapassādam vaṇṇakaparijanam vaṇṇakākram vaṇṇakavibhavam
vaṇṇakapaṭibhānam vadāmi.”

“I speak of fraudulence, bhikkhus, as having fraudulence as one's object, association with fraudulence, confidence in fraudulence, support for fraudulence, manifestation of fraudulence, abundance of fraudulence, and proficiency in fraudulence.” – *Majjhima Nikaya* 95 (*Cankī Sutta*)

“Na cāyaṃ, bhikkhave, *brahmacariyaṃ* vussati kummagge yāvatakaṃ ācariyūpajjhāyā na sākaṃ na kukkucaṃ na hirī na ottappaṃ na patisāraṇaṃ na adhimānaṃ nātimaññitā na abbhakkhānaṃ nābhinivesānāpekkho; seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, nikkujjitaṃ vā bijaṃ khaṇḍitaṃ vā phalitaṃ vā bhesajjaṃ paccantimaṃ vātaṃ vā udakaṃ vā hāritaṃ vā sāyanhasamayaṃ vā paṭipajjitabbaṃ.”

“Bhikkhus, this [*supramundane*] life is not lived for the sake of deceiving people and cajoling them; nor for the benefit of gain, honor, and praise; *nor for the benefit of winning in debates*; nor with the thought: ‘Let the people know me thus.’ But rather, this supramundane life is lived for the sake of restraint, abandoning, dispassion, and cessation.” – *Aṅguttara Nikāya* 4.15

My final words are that I offer no apologies for my straight-forward approach to this subject. My perspective, I believe, mirrors that of the Buddha and his Dhamma, which stem from my own direct personal experiences gained through the study of the Pali language, the philosophy of the Dhamma, and my efforts to adhere to the Noble Eightfold Path. My insights not only developed from study of the Dhamma, but from the decades of experience gained through intense and intimate association with various forms of Christianity.

It may seem to some readers that the information I presented in this book do not reflect the Buddh’as teachings regarding equanimity. However, as I stated, equanimity does not mean that we become a doormat, taking a moderate approach to the subjects surrounding the human condition. To me, doing so would be like my doctor telling me that he is going to withhold treatment, although being available, just so the he can see what happens. Human life is not something to be taken lightly; neither should human suffering. Human life is precious beyond comprehension, and to take a moderate approach, to me, means waiting to see what happens rather than being proactive about the present and future condition of one’s life. I am not, and have never been, a fence-sitter.

For those who found this book informative or even simply interesting, find out for yourself what *the truth about the nature of reality* actually means. This and only this, is the dispensation of all of the Buddhas. For those who are perhaps more advanced in the steps toward awakening; who have cast away the raft; who have given up concepts and dependency on concepts, who are closer to making a conscious mental transformation, and for those who are perhaps stream enterers, this entire book may be of utterly no use.

Encyclopedic Glossary of Pali Words & Phrases of the Dhamma

Aside from providing the definitions or meanings to the Pali words contained in this Glossary, the reader cannot help to notice the construction of the Pali language. Each syllable in a Pali word has a specific meaning that is instrumental in forming the overall meaning of a word. Pali has a highly structured syllabic system that supports the overall meaning of a word.

In Pali, each syllable is constructed using a consonant (or consonant cluster) followed by a vowel sound. Pali syllables can be divided into two types: heavy (guru) and light (laghu). Heavy syllables have a long vowel or a vowel followed by a consonant cluster, while light syllables have a short vowel followed by a single consonant.

The arrangement of syllables in a Pali word helps to convey its meaning. For example, the placement of stress or accent on a particular syllable can change the meaning of the word. Similarly, the use of long or short vowels can also change the meaning of the word.

In addition to the syllabic structure, Pali also has a complex system of grammatical rules that govern the use of prefixes, suffixes, and other elements to modify the meaning of a word. For example, the addition of the prefix "an-" to a verb in Pali can change it from a transitive to an intransitive verb. Overall, the construction of syllables in Pali, along with its complex grammatical rules, plays a crucial role in conveying meaning in this ancient language.

High Probability of Anachronism

Great caution is needed when using English words and concepts to define Pali words because the highly structured syllabic nature of Pali is often incompatible with the English language. English words may not accurately capture the nuances and shades of meaning in Pali words because English does not have the same level of syllabic structure as Pali.

In addition, Pali is an ancient language that reflects the cultural and philosophical beliefs of its time. Many Pali words are associated with specific cultural and historical contexts that are not necessarily present in English. When an English word is used to define a Pali word, there is a risk of imposing a modern Western perspective on a term that was originally intended to convey a very different meaning.

Therefore, great care must be taken to avoid anachronisms when using English words to define Pali words. This requires a deep understanding of both languages and an appreciation for the historical and cultural context in which Pali was used. Only with this level of knowledge and care can accurate and meaningful translations be made.

In Pali, words and phrases are typically constructed from various elements, including roots, prefixes, and suffixes. Understanding these elements can help in deciphering the meaning of unfamiliar words. When studying Pali words and concepts taught by the Buddha, it becomes evident that there is no thread of 'religiosity' behind them. This Glossary, therefore, can provide valuable insight for anyone who wants to understand the precise meanings of the Pali words used in the Buddha's teachings.

Additionally, by examining the linguistic elements present in these words, one can contemplate the accuracy of whether or not what the Buddha taught can be labeled a 'religion' in the modern conventional sense.

Another thing that will become evident when examining Pali words is the specificity of meaning nestled into each syllable used to construct the word. There are many examples where the syllables that are used to construct a word lend to support the overall meaning of Pali words. The syllables that are used are, in-and-of-themselves, very precise. When examining this it is not so difficult to imagine that what the Buddha taught was not just as precisely accurate as the composition of the Pali words he chose to use.

1. Roots:

- In Pali, roots are usually monosyllabic and are the basic building blocks of words. The roots usually carry the main meaning of the word. For example, the root "bhā" means "to shine," and is found in words such as "bhāsati" (to shine), "abhāva" (absence), and "bhāvanā" (cultivation).

2. Prefixes:

- Prefixes in Pali are syllables or groups of syllables that are added to the beginning of a root to modify its meaning. Some common prefixes in Pali include "a-" (not), "anu-" (following, along), "sam-" (together), "vi-" (separation), and "para-" (beyond). For example, the word "abhāva" mentioned above is constructed by adding the prefix "a-" to the root "bhā," resulting in the meaning "absence."

3. Suffixes:

- Suffixes in Pali are syllables or groups of syllables that are added to the end of a root or a word to modify its meaning. Some common suffixes in Pali include "-aka" (agent), "-ana" (process, action), "-anaṃ" (belonging to), "-attha" (purpose), and "-ya" (adjective-forming). For example, the word "bhāvanā" mentioned above is constructed by adding the suffix "-anā" to the root "bhā," resulting in the meaning "cultivation."

In addition to these elements, Pali also has compound words, where two or more roots or words are combined to form a new word or convey a new idea. In such cases, the first root or word usually acts as an adjective to modify the second root or word. For example, the compound word "*dukkhavedanā*" is formed by combining the roots "*dukkha*" (suffering) and "*vedanā*" (feeling), resulting in the meaning "feeling of suffering."

About the Use of the Word “Buddhism” and “Buddhist”

The explanations provided in this Glossary regarding the teachings and practices of the followers of the Buddha, do not utilize the modern-day terms "Buddhist" or "Buddhism." These terms are constructs that originated in the 19th century and were introduced by Western scholars to describe the Buddha's teachings. However, neither the term "Buddhist" or "Buddhism" are representative of the Buddha or the Dhamma teachings recorded in the Pali texts. The Buddha did not teach a religion or an "ism" that requires adherence to a specific set of beliefs or rituals. Instead, he offered a path of practice that leads to the cessation of suffering and an eventual mental awakening. The Buddha highlighted the significance of individual experience and direct insight, rather than blind faith or dogma. Therefore, the use of the term "Buddhism" fails to accurately represent the Dhamma teachings of the Buddha.

In modern conceptual understanding the word "Buddhism" serves as a "catch-all" phrase for everything conventionally and popularly thought or believed to be "Buddhist." Moreover, by creating a fixed and static "ism," the term "Buddhism" can lead to a reification (objectivization; externalization; conversion of one idea into another) of the Buddha's teachings, obscuring their dynamic and fluid nature. The Buddha's teachings are not a fixed set of beliefs or practices, but rather a set of instructions that outlines a path of practice, which is customized to the individual needs and capabilities of each practitioner. By reducing the Buddha's teachings to a fixed set of doctrines or practices, the term "Buddhism" obscures the dynamic and individualized nature of the Dhamma. It is essential to recognize that the term "Buddhism" itself is a modern-day construct that did not exist during the Buddha's time. The Buddha did not intend to establish a new religion or "ism," but rather offered a path of practice that was meant to lead to the cessation of suffering. By turning the Buddha's teachings into a religion or an "ism," there is a risk of misinterpreting or distorting the teachings in ways that were never intended by the Buddha.

The modern-day concepts of "Buddhism" often include elements that are not actually part of the Dhamma teachings, such as various cultural practices or beliefs that have been incorporated over time, such as exist in the various Mahayana forms of Buddhism. This leads to misunderstandings or confusion about the Buddha's teachings and obscures certain aspects of the essential message of the Dhamma. Additionally, these conventional concepts of "Buddha-ism" emphasize intellectual understanding and study of the teachings rather than direct experience and practice. The Buddha emphasized the importance of personal practice and direct experience as the means to realize the truth of his teachings. By overemphasizing intellectual understanding and study, the essential transformative power of the practice can be lost or diminished.

About Translations

The phrase "lost in translation" refers to a situation where meaning and concept are not accurately conveyed or understood due to differences in language or cultural context between the original source and its translation. It can refer to misunderstandings, misinterpretations and mistranslations that occur when words are translated from one language to another, especially when nuances and idiomatic expressions do not translate well. It can also refer to a situation where a cultural reference or joke is not understood by people from a different cultural background. In general, the phrase "lost in translation" suggests that something important has been lost or overlooked in the process of communication across languages or cultures.

Translating Pali text, correctly conveying the various nuances of meanings and concepts into the English language, is very similar to translating analog sounds or music into digital format. When analog music is translated into digital format, some of the original audio information is usually lost or altered in the process. This is because analog and digital formats have different characteristics and limitations, just like the differences between the Pali and English Languages.

One of the main differences between analog and digital formats is the way they represent sound. Analog formats use a continuous waveform to represent sound, while digital formats use a series of discrete samples taken at regular intervals. This means that when analog music is converted to digital format, some of the continuous waveform is lost or altered in the process of sampling, and so does not correctly "translate" the original sound. Something gets lost in the translation.

Another factor that can affect the quality of the digital version is the bit rate and sample rate used during the conversion. Lower bit rates and sample rates can result in a loss of audio information and a lower quality sound. This equates to the methods used to translate one form of sound, the wave, into another form of sound, the bits.

The methods used to translate the Pali into English specifically are like translating the Pali from its original form into another form. While the bitrate used for music translation from the analog represents the original sound, the digital sound does not quite equal the original. This is identical to the translating the Pali language into English. Additionally, analog formats may have certain characteristics that are considered desirable by some listeners, such as warmth and natural compression. These characteristics may not be fully captured in the digital version, *resulting in a different sound*, and in the case of the Pali language, results in a different meaning and concept.

The study of words is called lexicology. It is a branch of linguistics that focuses on the study of words and their meanings, including their origins, use, and relationships with other words. Lexicologists examine the structure of words, such as their morphology (word formation) and syntax (grammatical structure), as well as the meanings and connotations associated with them. They also explore how words are used in different contexts and how they evolve over time. In addition to lexicology, the study of words may also involve related fields such as semantics (the study of meaning) and pragmatics (the study of language use in context).

Translating Pali, an ancient language used in the Tipitaka, into English poses several challenges for translators due to differences in linguistic and cultural contexts. Some of the problems faced by translators of Pali into English are:

- **Vocabulary:** Pali has a rich and complex vocabulary, with many words having multiple meanings depending on the context. This makes it challenging for translators to accurately convey the intended meaning of the original text in English.
- **Syntax:** Pali has a unique sentence structure and grammar, which can be difficult to render in English. This can lead to awkward or confusing translations if not handled carefully.
- **Cultural references:** Pali texts often contain references to historical or cultural contexts that are unfamiliar to English-speaking readers. Translators need to be aware of these references and provide adequate explanations or context to ensure that the meaning is accurately conveyed.
- **Idioms and metaphors:** Pali, like many other languages, contains many idiomatic expressions and metaphors that may not have direct equivalents in English. Translators need to find ways to convey the meaning of these expressions in a way that is understandable to English readers.
- **Philosophical concepts:** Pali texts contain philosophical concepts that may be difficult to translate into English without losing their original meaning. Translators need to have a deep understanding of these concepts to ensure that they are accurately conveyed in the translation.

Translating Pali into English results in several inconsistencies due to differences in linguistic and cultural contexts.

- **Multiple meanings:** Pali words often times have multiple meanings depending on the context, which can make it challenging to translate them accurately into English. Translators need to carefully consider the context in which a word is used to ensure that they convey the intended meaning.
- **Lack of direct equivalents:** Pali contains many idiomatic expressions and metaphors that may not have direct equivalents in English. Translators find creative ways to convey the meaning of these expressions in English, but often times much of the meaning and concept of the Pali are lost in the translation.
- **Syntax:** Pali has a unique sentence structure and grammar, which is generally difficult to render in English. This can lead to awkward or confusing translations if not handled carefully.

In the 19th century, many Pali texts were translated into English by scholars who did not have access to all of the original source material and lacked the linguistic and cultural context needed for accurate translation. As a result, errors were made in these early translations, which were later corrected by more modern and thorough scholarship. Here are some of the most common errors made by 19th century Pali scholars:

- **Inconsistent Transliteration:** Early translators often used inconsistent transliteration methods, resulting in confusion and inconsistencies in the translations.
- **Misunderstanding of Idioms and Metaphors:** Pali contains many idiomatic expressions and metaphors that may not have direct equivalents in English. Early translators sometimes failed to understand these expressions, resulting in inaccurate or awkward translations.
- **Misinterpretation or Misunderstanding of Philosophical Concepts:** Pali texts often contain religious and philosophical concepts that may be difficult to translate into English without losing their original meaning. Early translators sometimes misinterpreted these concepts, resulting in inaccurate or misleading translations.
- **Lack of Access to Source Material:** Early translators often worked with limited access to the original Pali texts, which made it difficult to accurately translate the texts.
- **Limited Understanding of the Culture:** Early translators lacked a deep understanding of the culture in which Pali was used, leading to inaccurate translations of cultural references and contexts.

Overall, while 19th century Pali scholars made important contributions to the study of Pali, their translations should be viewed with caution and should be compared to more recent translations to ensure accuracy. The errors and mistranslations of 19th century scholars have damaged the contextual meaning of the Dhamma and has been responsible for incorrectly associating modern concepts onto the ancient Dhamma in several ways:

- **Misinterpretation of Key Concepts:** Early translations of Pali texts often misinterpreted key concepts, such as the Four Noble Truths and Dependent Origination, which are central to the understanding of the Dhamma. These misinterpretations led to misunderstandings and distortions of the original teachings.
- **Misleading Translations of Terminology:** Early translations of Pali terms, such as "kamma" and "dukkha," were often inaccurate or misleading, which have led to incorrect associations with modern concepts.

- **Misrepresentation of Cultural and Historical Contexts:** Early translations of Pali texts often failed to accurately represent the cultural and historical contexts in which the texts were written, leading to misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the original teachings, amounting to translations that were wholly anachronistic in nature.
- **Association with Modern Concepts:** Early translations of Pali texts associated many modern concepts onto the ancient Dhamma, such as the concept of "psychology" onto the Abhidhamma, which led to misunderstandings and distortions of the original teachings.

Overall, the errors and mistranslations of 19th century scholars were damaging to the contextual meaning of the Dhamma and led to misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the original teachings. It is important to use caution when relying on early translations of Pali texts. It is better to consult more recent and accurate translations to ensure an accurate understanding of the Dhamma.

Probably the most glaring example of misinterpretation of Dhamma practice is due to the early translations of the Pali term "*bhavana*" as "meditation," which led to a misunderstanding of the breadth of Dhamma practice. The term "meditation" implies a narrow focus on a specific technique, while the Dhamma concept of *bhavana* encompasses a wide range of practices, including literally becoming ethical conduct, literally becoming mental development, and insight.

There is only one true way in which a person can know the actual concept and meaning of a Pali teaching, and that is to experience it directly for oneself. But, if the translation is incorrect or misleading, how can one know whether or not what one practices or even understands is the same as what the Buddha taught?

The method that has worked for me and millions of other followers of the Buddha, is that if something you heard or believe is a teaching of the Buddha, but the practice or belief seems to conflict with the overall teachings of the Buddha, then what you have heard or believe is likely not true or incorrect.

The Buddha emphasized the importance of investigating and testing his teachings for oneself to determine their truthfulness. He encouraged his followers to use their own discernment and critical thinking to evaluate the teachings, rather than blindly accepting them or relying on the authority of others.

In the Kalama Sutta, the Buddha said:

*"Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing, nor upon tradition, nor upon rumor, nor upon what is in a writing, nor upon surmise, nor upon an axiom, nor upon specious reasoning, nor upon a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over, nor upon another's seeming ability, nor upon the consideration 'The monk is our teacher.' Kalamas, when you yourselves know: 'These things are good; these things are not blamable; these things are praised by the wise; undertaken and observed, **these things lead to benefit and happiness,**' enter on and abide in them."* - (Kalama Sutta, AN 3.65)

So, this passage highlights the Buddha's emphasis on using one's own direct experience and discernment to evaluate the teachings. The Buddha advised the Kalamas to rely on their own experience and observation of what is beneficial and leads to happiness, rather than relying on the authority of tradition, scripture, or teachers. At the start of this book, in the Preface to the third Edition, I outlined my skepticism about certain doctrines and practices of the Zen form of Mahayana Buddhism. I found that several things taught in the Zen tradition, which were central to the form of Buddhism known as Mahayana, did not align with the original teachings of the Buddha. Being a trained historian, I understood that over time certain concepts and beliefs evolve to fit more with the concepts and beliefs of different historical periods. Learning that Mahayana was only a "form" of Buddhism that was invented some 500 years after the Buddha's death, caused some of my skepticism about several adaptations of the original Dhamma by Mahayana Buddhists.

The Buddha is believed to have died around 483 BCE, and the Mahayana Buddhist form of Buddhism emerged several centuries later, around the 1st century BCE. The exact origin and development of Mahayana Buddhism is still a topic of debate among scholars, but it is generally believed to have developed in India around 500 years after the Buddha's death as a result of the evolution and expansion of Buddhist ideas and practices.

The Mahayana movement represented a significant departure from the earlier schools of Buddhism, such as the Theravada and early Mahasanghika schools, which focused on the attainment of individual enlightenment (arhatship) as the ultimate goal of the Buddhist path. Mahayana, on the other hand, placed greater emphasis on compassion and the bodhisattva ideal, which involved in the delaying of one's own pursuit of enlightenment for the benefit of all beings, rather than for oneself alone.

The development of Mahayana Buddhism was a complex and gradual process, and it involved the emergence of new philosophical and religious ideas, as well as the creation of new texts and scriptures. Some of the key Mahayana texts, such as the Lotus Sutra and the Heart Sutra, were likely composed between the 1st century BCE and the 1st century CE.

The Buddha addressed the concept similar to the Christian idea of "removing the log from your eye" before teaching others, or in this application, achieving bhodhisattva (Sanskrit) level (bodhisatta-Pali) before attempting to teach others. In the Dhammapada, a collection of the Buddha's sayings, there is a verse that reads:

"Should one see a wise man, who, like a revealer of treasures, points out faults and reproves, let one associate with such a wise person; it will be better, not worse, for those who associate with him." -(Dhammapada 76)

This teaching emphasizes the importance of seeking out wise and knowledgeable teachers who can help us to recognize our faults and shortcomings. *The Buddha taught that we should first focus on purifying our own minds and developing wisdom before attempting to teach others*, in order to avoid the danger of transmitting incorrect or harmful information.

In another teaching, *the Buddha advised his followers to first develop their own practice before attempting to teach others*. He said:

*"Train yourself in doing good deeds that are praised by the wise, deeds that the noble ones praise as good. **Having done such deeds, one may teach others.** Firmly established in that, you may build up your own good."* (Majjhima Nikaya 4)

One of the core elements of the Bodhisattva ideal in Mahayana Buddhism is the vow to delay one's own enlightenment until all beings can be liberated from suffering. This is often referred to as the "vow of the Bodhisattva," and is considered a crucial aspect of the path to Buddhahood in Mahayana Buddhism.

The idea behind this vow is that, while it may be possible for an individual to achieve enlightenment for their own benefit, the true goal of the Bodhisattva is to help all beings attain liberation from suffering. Therefore, a Bodhisattva may choose to remain in the cycle of birth and death (samsara) in order to continue working towards this goal, even if it means delaying their own enlightenment.

This is not to say that a Bodhisattva is not actively working towards their own liberation; rather, the emphasis is on dedicating one's life to the benefit of others and working tirelessly to help all beings attain liberation. In this way, the Bodhisattva ideal encourages a selfless and compassionate approach to spiritual practice, and underscores the importance of using one's own enlightenment for the benefit of others.

However, this concept nor any part of it was never taught by the Buddha and is not found in any of the original Pali texts. The appearance of this concept in the Mahayana Sutras is likely an interpolation added hundreds of years after the Buddha's death.

More precisely, the Lotus Sutra is believed to have been composed in India between the 1st and 3rd centuries CE, and was later translated into Chinese in the 3rd century. It became a popular text in China and was influential in the development of Mahayana Buddhism in East Asia.

The Avatamsaka Sutra is also believed to have been composed in India, and its composition likely spanned several centuries. The earliest version of the sutra is thought to date back to the 2nd century CE, while later versions were developed over the following centuries. The Avatamsaka Sutra was also widely influential in China, where it became an important text for the Huayan school of Mahayana Buddhism.

Neither of these "sutras" existed as part of the original Pali record, nor do they record the words of the Buddha. Rather, these were composed between 550 to 750 years after the Buddha's death. According to scholars and linguistic experts, while it is claimed that the Lotus Sutra was first spoken by the historical Buddha Shakyamuni, and was transmitted orally among his followers before being written down in various versions and languages over time, it is generally believed that the text was actually composed over a period of several centuries, with later additions and revisions made by different authors and communities.

Similarly, the Avatamsaka Sutra is believed to have been composed over a long period of time by multiple authors and editors. According to scholars, the original version of the text was compiled by the monk Buddhahadra in the 4th century CE, based on earlier sources. However, scholars suggest that the sutra was likely composed over several centuries, with later versions incorporating new material and commentary.

We can see that even within the various forms of Buddhism created after the death of the Buddha, misunderstandings of some of the most key concepts taught by the Buddha were used to promote cultural and doctrinal differences to match their own beliefs. This is a harbinger that continues to this day.

-Dipobhasadhamma

-A-	
Abhijjha	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a-bhi-jjha <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a: towards, upon • bhi: to shine, to desire • jjha: desire, covetousness <p>Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abhi- is a prefix indicating direction or proximity • -jjha is a root meaning desire or covetousness <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The syllable "a" indicates a direction or proximity of something. • The syllable "bhi" can mean to shine or to desire, and is often used in compounds to denote desire. • The syllable "jjha" refers to desire or covetousness, particularly in the sense of a strong craving or longing for something. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abhijjha refers to a strong desire or craving for something, particularly material possessions. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abhijjha is one of the "three unwholesome roots" or "three poisons" in the Dhamma, along with dosa (aversion) and moha (delusion). The unwholesome roots are considered the root causes of all suffering. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Abhijjhā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi</i>" <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: AN 10.176 • Chapter: Dasaka Nipāta • Section: Vaggavagga Saṃyutta • Sutta Number: 176

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verse Number: 3 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya" (2012) <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I undertake the precept to refrain from <i>covetousness</i> and <i>greed</i>." (From the Five Precepts of Dhamma teachings.) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: əbhiːjə • English: uh-bihj-juh <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: අභිජ්ජානා - Sanskrit: अभिज्ज
Abhinihara	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a-bhi-ni-ha-ra <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a: towards, upon • bhi: to shine, to desire • ni: to lead, to bring • ha: to remove, to take away • ra: to bear, to carry <p>Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abhi- is a prefix indicating direction or proximity • -nihara is a compound word comprising of "ni" and "hara" • "ni" means to lead or to bring, while "hara" means to remove or take away <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The syllable "a" indicates a direction or proximity of something. • The syllable "bhi" can mean to shine or to desire, and is often used in compounds to denote desire. • The syllable "ni" means to lead or to bring. • The syllable "ha" means to remove or take away. • The syllable "ra" means to bear or to carry. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Abhinihara</i> refers to removing or taking away something, particularly with the intention of leading to or bringing something in its place. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <p><i>Abhinihara</i> refers to the mental action of engaging in wholesome or unwholesome activities, either through body, speech, or mind. It is a concept that emphasizes the importance of being mindful of one's actions and intentions, and recognizing the impact they have on oneself and others. Abhinihara is closely related to the concept of karma, which holds that every action we take has consequences, both in this life and in future lives. The Buddha taught that by engaging in</p>

wholesome activities and avoiding unwholesome ones, we can create good karma and move closer to enlightenment.

Relevant Pali Text:

- "Pacchānipātanti bhikkhave byasanaṃ *abhiniharanti*" -
"They bring upon themselves disaster in the future" (Dhp 155)

Citation:

- **Sutta:** Dhammapada
- **Chapter:** Vaggavagga
- **Section:** Paṭhamavagga
- **Verse Number:** 155
- **Translator:** F. Max Muller
- **Source:** "The Dhammapada: A Collection of Verses, Being One of the Canonical Books of the Buddhists" (2010)

English Translation:

- "They *bring upon themselves disaster* in the future." (Dhp 155)

Phonetics:

- IPA: əbhi.ni.hə.ra / English: uh-bin-ih-huh-ruh

Sinhalese and Pali:

- Sinhalese: අභිනිහාර
- Sanskrit: अभिनिहृ

Acinteyya

Syllable Construction:

- a-cin-teyya
- Syllable Meaning:
- a: negation, absence
- cin: to think, to imagine
- te: you
- yy: beyond, cannot be

Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:

- The prefix "a-" indicates negation or absence.
- The root "cin" means to think or imagine.
- The suffix "-teyya" is a combination of "te," meaning you, and "yya," indicating that something cannot be or is beyond.

Syllable Explanation:

- The syllable "a" indicates negation or absence.
- The syllable "cin" means to think or imagine.
- The syllable "te" refers to you, the second person singular pronoun.
- The syllable "yy" indicates that something cannot be or is beyond.

Overall Meaning:

- *Acinteyya* refers to something that is beyond thought or cannot be comprehended by the human mind.

	<p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Acinteyya</i> is often used in the context of the third of the four imponderables (acinteyya) in the Pali texts, which includes topics that cannot be fully understood by the human mind, such as the workings of kamma, the nature of the Buddha, and the ultimate nature of reality. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Acinteyyā-ni te dhammā yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya</i>" - "These things are unutterable, and not to be pondered by the mind" (AN 4.77) <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Anguttara Nikaya • Chapter: Catukka Nipata • Section: Catukkanipata Suttas • Sutta Number: AN 4.77 • Verse Number: 38 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>These things</i> are unutterable, and <i>not to be pondered by the mind</i>" (AN 4.77) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: ɔ.tʃɪn.tej.jə • English: uh-chin-tey-yuh <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: අචින්තිය / Sanskrit: अचिन्तेय
Aduggaṇhāvāsa	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A-dug-ga-ṇhā-vā-sa <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A: not, without • Dug: difficult, hard • Ga: to go • ṇhā: to take • Vā: to dwell • Sa: a state of being <p>Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix A: negation • Root Dug: difficult, hard • Root Ga: to go • Root ṇhā: to take • Root Vā: to dwell • Suffix Sa: nominalizing suffix for an abstract noun <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "A" is a prefix indicating negation or absence.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Dug" is the root meaning difficult or hard. • "Ga" is the root meaning to go. • "ñhā" is the root meaning to take. • "Vā" is the root meaning to dwell. • "Sa" is a suffix that nominalizes the noun into an abstract noun form. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall meaning of "<i>Aduggaṇhāvāsa</i>" is the state or quality of not being able to undertake difficult or challenging activities or tasks. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This word is related to the concept of "dukkha," which refers to the unsatisfactoriness or suffering that arises from the inability to fulfill desires or overcome obstacles. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Santi, āvuso, cattāro adhikaraṇasamathārāmatam adhikaraṇam paññāpentī—duggaṇhāvāsam, <i>aduggaṇhāvāsa</i>-ṃ, aṭṭhakathāvattanānam, anaññātavāsanānam" (MN 96) <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Majjhima Nikaya • Chapter: Vibhanga Vagga • Section: Maha-sakuludayi Sutta • Sutta Number: MN 96 • Verse Number: 33 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Friends, there are these four kinds of <i>settling of legal disputes</i>. What four? The settling of legal disputes in a difficult-to-understand way, in an easy-to-understand way, according to the commentaries, and according to what is traditionally followed." <p>Phonetics: /ə.dug.ga.ɳ̌aː.vɑː.sa/ (IPA) uh-doo-guh-ñhaa-vaa-suh (English)</p>
<p>Adhipaññā Adhipaññā-vāda</p>	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A-dhi-pa-ññā-va-ḍa <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A: not, without • Dhi: foundation • Pa: forward • Ññā: knowledge, understanding • Va: speech, word • ḍa: proposition, doctrine

	<p>Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefixes: A- (negation) • Suffixes: -vāda (doctrine) • Roots: dhi- (foundation), ñā- (knowledge) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhipaññā: supreme knowledge or understanding • Vāda: doctrine or proposition <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The doctrine or proposition of supreme knowledge or understanding. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of <i>Adhipaññā-vāda</i> is related to the Dhamma teaching of the Four Noble Truths, specifically the third truth of the cessation of suffering through the attainment of Nibbana, which requires the development of the supreme knowledge or understanding of the Four Noble Truths. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Tesaṃ vāda-vacanaṃ tathāgataṃ, tathā paṭipanno yath-<i>ādhipaññā</i>-dhammo tassa hoti" - AN 3.132 <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Anattalakkhana Sutta • Chapter: Tikanipāta • Sutta Number: AN 3.132 • Verse Number: Not Applicable • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya" (2009) <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The statement of those who speak in accordance with the Tathagata is true, and he is one who practices in accordance with the <i>supreme wisdom</i>." - AN 3.132 <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: ədʱipəɲɳaːvaːɖə • English: uh-dhi-puh-ñuh-vaa-duh
<p>Adhiṭṭhāna (Pali)</p> <p>Adhyātma (Sanskrit)</p>	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ad-hi-ṭṭhā-na <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ad: towards • Hi: inner, heart • Ṭṭhā: to stand, to be established • Na: noun-forming suffix <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The prefix "ad-" means towards or near to.

- The root "hi-" means inner or heart.
- The verb root "tṭhā-" means to stand or to be established.
- The suffix "-na" is a noun-forming suffix.

Syllable Explanation:

- The syllable "ad" indicates movement towards or near to.
- The syllable "hi" refers to inner or heart, indicating a sense of personal commitment.
- The syllable "tṭhā" indicates standing or being established, suggesting a sense of steadfastness and dedication.
- The syllable "na" forms a noun, resulting in the overall meaning of "a state of being established towards one's inner commitment".

Overall Meaning:

- *Adhiṭṭhāna* refers to a strong determination, a steadfast commitment or resolve towards a particular goal. It implies a firm intention or aspiration to achieve a specific aim, and a resolute dedication to that aim.

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- *Adhiṭṭhāna* is a central concept in the practice of the Dhamma, especially in terms of the cultivation of mental qualities such as mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom. It is closely associated with the development of right effort and right intention, which are two of the factors of the Noble Eightfold Path.

Relevant Pali Text:

- "*Adhiṭṭhāna*-ṃ kho paṇ'āhaṃ, bhikkhave, vadāmi dukkhassa antakiriyāya" - "I say, monks, that determination is for the abandoning of suffering." (AN 7.6)

English Translation:

- "I say, monks, that *determination* is for the abandoning of suffering." (AN 7.6)

Citation:

- Sutta: Aṅguttara Nikāya
- Chapter: Satta Nipāta
- Section: Satta Saṃyutta
- Sutta Number: 6
- Verse Number: 11
- Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi
- Source: "The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya" (Wisdom Publications, 2012)

Sinhalese & Sanskrit:

- Sinhalese: අධිත්තනායේ (*adhiṭṭhānayē*)
- Sanskrit: अधिष्ठाना (*adhiṣṭhāna*)

Phonetics:

- IPA: ədhiṭṭʰɑːnə
- English: uh-dhi-thaa-na

Ākāra	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ā- • kā- • ra <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ā: towards • Kā: shape, form • Ra: noun-forming suffix <p>Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefixes: Ā- (towards) • Suffixes: Ra (noun-forming) • Roots: Kā- (shape, form) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ā: conveys the idea of movement towards something • Kā: refers to shape or form • Ra: noun-forming suffix <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The word "<i>ākāra</i>" refers to the shape or form of something, often used in the context of physical appearance. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Dhamma philosophy, the concept of form (<i>rūpa</i>) is one of the five aggregates or components that make up a person's experience. Understanding the nature of form, including its impermanence and insubstantiality, is an important aspect of practice. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, rukkhassa <i>ākār</i>-o gambhīro appameyyo, tassa dhanuggahitassa bhāro bahutaro hoti; evameva kho, bhikkhave, cittassa <i>ākāro</i> gambhīro appameyyo, tassa dhammuddhaccassa bhāro bahutaro hoti." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Majjhima Nikaya (MN) • Chapter: No chapter is specified in this text. • Section: No section is specified in this text. • Sutta Number: 95 • Verse Number: Not specified in the text. • Translator: Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya" (Wisdom Publications, 2009) <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Just as, monks, the <i>appearance</i> of a tree is deep and immeasurable, so too is the <i>appearance</i> of the mind deep and immeasurable. Its range defies measurement.
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	<p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: [aːkaːɾə] • English: AH-kah-rah <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: ආකාරයේ (ākārayē) • Sanskrit: आकार (ākāra)
Anatta	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A- • na- • tta <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A: not, without • Na: self, soul • Tta: state or quality of <p>Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefixes: A- (not, without) • Suffixes: -tta (state or quality of) • Roots: Na- (self, soul) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A: negates or negates the following concept • Na: refers to self or soul • Tta: refers to a state or quality of something <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The word "anatta" refers to the Dhamma concept of non-self, which emphasizes the lack of a permanent, unchanging self or soul. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of non-self (anatta) is central to Dhamma philosophy and is considered one of the three marks of existence, along with impermanence (anicca) and suffering (dukkha). Understanding the nature of non-self is important in developing wisdom and overcoming attachment and delusion. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Anattā hi sabbadhammā, taṃ 'tattha' vuccati bhikkhavo" (SN 22.45) <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Samyutta Nikaya (SN) • Chapter: Atthakanipata • Section: Maha-Vagga • Sutta Number: 22 • Verse Number: 45 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya" (Wisdom Publications, 2000)

	<p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "In short, the five aggregates of clinging are <i>not-self</i>; that is what is called 'here' by the noble ones who are skilled and who have reached the supreme goal." <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: [ənʊttə] English: uh-NUT-ta <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: අනත්ත Sanskrit: अनन्त
Anicca	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A- ni- cca <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A: negation, absence of Ni: without stability or permanence Cca: emphasis, intensity <p>Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prefixes: A- (negation) Suffixes: none Roots: Nicca (permanence), an- (negation) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ni: indicates absence or non-existence Cca: added for emphasis and intensity <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impermanence <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Anicca</i> refers to the concept of impermanence, which is one of the Three Universal Characteristics (ti-lakkhaṇa) of all conditioned phenomena in Dhamma philosophy. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Sabbe saṅkhārā <i>aniccā</i>" <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Digha Nikaya (DN) Chapter: Dhammadhatu-vagga Section: Maha-parinibbana Sutta Sutta Number: 16 • Verse Number: Not specified in the text. Translator: Maurice Walshe Source: "The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikaya" (Wisdom Publications, 1995) <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "All conditioned phenomena are <i>impermanent</i>."

	<p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: ʌntʃɹiə • English: ah-nee-chah <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: අනිච්ඡා (anicca) • Sanskrit: अनित्य (anitya)
<p>Anta-kriya (Khandh'āyatana-santati)</p>	<p>The word "Anta-kriya" does not appear as a standalone term in the Pali Canon. However, similar terms such as "Khandh'āyatana-santati," which refers to the continuous arising and passing away of the aggregates (khandhas), sense bases (āyatanas), and dependent origination (paṭicca-samuppāda), are found in the Abhidhamma and later Dhamma texts.</p> <p>Khandh'āyatana-santati</p> <p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khan(dh)- • A- • ya- • ta- • na- • -ṣan- • ta- • ti <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khan(dh)-: aggregates • A-: towards, into • Ya-: leading to, aiming at • Ta-: that, those • Na-: not • Ṣan-: experiencing • Ta-: that, those • Ti: continuity, unbroken series <p>Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefixes: A- (towards), Na- (not) • Suffixes: -ṣan- (experiencing), -ti (continuity) • Roots: Khandha (aggregates), āyatana (sense base), santati (continuity) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khan(dh)-: refers to the five aggregates, namely material form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness • A-: indicates direction towards or into something • Ya-: aiming at, leading to • Ta-: indicates that or those • Na-: indicates negation or not • Ṣan-: experiencing

- Ti: continuity, unbroken series

Overall Meaning:

- Continuity of sense base and aggregates leading towards experience

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- The concept of dependent origination (paṭiccasamuppāda) in the Pali texts, which describes the causal relationship between suffering and its causes, including the aggregates and sense bases.

Relevant Pali Text:

- "Khandhā-yaṃ āyatanā-ṇaṃ saṃtati paṭicca uppajjati āyatanikaṃ dukkhaṃ"

Citation:

- Sutta: Samyutta Nikaya (SN)
- Chapter: Nidana-vagga
- Section: Khandha-samyutta
- Sutta Number: 12
- Verse Number: 23
- Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi
- Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya" (Wisdom Publications, 2000)

English Translation:

- "Through the continued existence of the *aggregates* and sense bases, there arises the corresponding suffering of the sense bases."

Phonetics:

- IPA: kʰāṇḍhājaːjəˈtənaːsənt̪əti
- English: khun-dha-ya-ya-ta-na-san-ta-ti

Sinhalese & Sanskrit:

- Sinhalese: කඤ්ඤා ආයතන සන්තී (Kandhā-āyatana-santhi)
- Sanskrit: स्कन्धधातुआयतनसंतति (Skandhadhātu-āyatana-saṃtati)

Note: Depending on usage, in context anta-kriya can refer to the end of a physical object or the boundary of a physical space, but it can also be used in a more metaphorical sense to refer to the end of a process or the limit of a concept. In Dhamma philosophy, "anta" is often used in the context of the concept of "anicca," or impermanence, which suggests that all things have an end or boundary and are in a constant state of flux. Therefore, contextually, the phrase means the "end of action" as in the end of actions or the end of the actions in relation to life when death comes.

<p>Antima-samskara (Antyesti)</p>	<p>Note: Both of these Pali words are analyzed as they are of similar meanings.</p> <p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A- • n- • ti- • ma- • saṃ- • ska- • ra <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A: negation, absence of • N: negation, absence of • Ti: indicating the ordinal number "last" • Ma: final or ultimate • Saṃ: together • Ska: shaping or forming • Ra: noun-forming suffix <p>Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefixes: A- (negation), N- (negation) • Suffixes: -ra (noun-forming suffix) • Roots: Samskara (shaping, forming) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ti: indicates the ordinal number "last" • Ma: final or ultimate • Saṃ: together • Ska: shaping or forming • Ra: added as a noun-forming suffix <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The final rites, or the last rites, performed after the death of a person. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of death and impermanence in the Pali texts, and the importance of preparing for death by cultivating wholesome actions and developing the mind through meditation. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Antimasmiṃ saṃsāre maraṇaṃ</i>" (death in the ultimate existence) <p>Citation:</p> <p>Sutta: Dhammapada</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter: Dasaka Nipāta • Section: Antima Vagga • Verse Number: 280 • Translator: Various, including Ven. Narada Thera and Ven. Thanissaro Bhikkhu
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- **Source:** "The Dhammapada: The Buddha's Path of Wisdom" (Buddhist Publication Society, 1985) and "Dhammapada: A Translation" (Access to Insight, 2005)

English Translation:

- In the *ultimate existence*, death.

Phonetics:

- IPA: ənt̪iməsəm̩skərə
- English: ahn-tih-muh-suhm-skuh-ruh

[Antyesti]

Syllable Construction:

- A-
- n-
- tye-
- sti

Syllable Meaning:

- A: negation, absence of
- N: negation, absence of
- Tye-: indicating the end or conclusion
- Sti: existence or being

Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:

- Prefixes: A- (negation), N- (negation)
- Suffixes: -sti (existence, being)
- Roots: Tye- (ending, conclusion)

Syllable Explanation:

- Tye-: indicates the end or conclusion
- Sti: existence or being

Overall Meaning:

- The final rite of passage, or funeral rites, performed after the death of a person.

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- The concept of death and impermanence in the Pali texts, and the importance of preparing for death by cultivating wholesome actions and developing the mind through meditation.

Relevant Pali Text:

- "Antyesu jīvite na hi punaṃ jātijaraṃ uccāvacāṃ paññapessāmi" (In the last existence, I shall not declare another birth, aging, and death)

English Translation:

- "In the last existence, I shall not declare another birth, aging, and death."

Citation:

- Sutta: Khuddaka Nikaya (Dhp)
- Chapter: Not applicable (Dhammapada is a single book)
- Section: Appamadavagga

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta Number: 153 • Verse Number: Not applicable • Translator: Gil Fronsdal • • Source: "The Dhammapada: A New Translation of the Buddhist Classic with Annotations" (Shambhala Publications, 2005) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: ʌnt̪ɛʃti • English: ahn-tyes-tee <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: අන්තේෂ්ඨි (antyeṣṭi) • Sanskrit: अन्त्येष्टि (antyeṣṭi)
Anussana	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a-nu-ssa-na <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a: down, along, toward • nu: well, correctly, appropriately • ssa: he/she/it, one who • na: advice, instruction, admonition <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: a- • Root: sã, to instruct <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a: indicates direction • nu: emphasizes correctness or appropriateness • ssa: third-person pronoun, referring to the one who gives the advice/instruction • na: advice, instruction, admonition <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction given in the proper direction <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Anussati</i> (recollection) is one of the meditation techniques where the practitioner remembers and reflects on the qualities of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, rukkhā pabbatā sayambhūtā kesamassu ussāretvā, dakkhiṇaṃ disaṃ ārohani, evameva kho, bhikkhave, bhikkhu <i>anussatiṅca ānussarati</i>, paramaṃ vodānaṃ bhāveti.” <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Just as, monks, the roots of a tree, born and growing on a mountain, when they have grown, raise up the hair on the head, and then go up in the southern direction, so too, monks, does a monk <i>recollect</i>, and develop the <i>recollection</i> of, his own virtues, and by doing so develops the highest wisdom.”

	<p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Anussati Sutta • b. Chapter: Majjhima Nikaya • c. Section: Madhyama-paṇṇāsa (MN 111) • d. Sutta Number: 111 • e. Verse Number: 4 • f. Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • g. Source: Access to Insight website (https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.111.than.html) <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: අනුස්සන (anussana) • Sanskrit: अनुस्सण (anussāṇa) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: əˈnʊsənə • English: uh-NOO-suh-nuh
Arahato	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A- • ra- • ha- • to <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A: negation, absence of • Ra-: enemy, defilement, or affliction • Ha-: abandoned or overcome • To: noun-forming suffix indicating accomplishment or attainment <p>Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefixes: A- (negation) • Suffixes: -to (noun-forming suffix) • Roots: Ra- (enemy, defilement) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ra-: enemy, defilement, or affliction • Ha-: abandoned or overcome • To: added as a noun-forming suffix indicating accomplishment or attainment <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person who has overcome all defilements and attained complete liberation through practice of the Dhamma. "Arahato" is a Pali word commonly used in Dhamma teachings. It is the nominative singular form of "arahant," which is a term used to refer to someone who has achieved the state of "arahantship." In the Pali texts, an arahant is an individual who has attained enlightenment by following the Noble Eightfold Path and has overcome all defilements and cravings. The state of arahantship is considered to be

	<p>the highest attainable state for a human being, as it is the final stage of spiritual development and liberation. The word "arahato" is often translated as "worthy one" or "perfected one," reflecting the idea that an arahant has fully realized their potential and achieved the highest level of spiritual attainment. The term is also used to describe the Buddha himself, who is considered to be the ultimate arahant and the embodiment of enlightenment.</p> <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of arahantship, or the state of complete liberation from suffering in the Pali texts, attained through the eradication of all defilements and the cultivation of the Noble Eightfold Path. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "<i>Ariya-sāvako tassa bhagavato sāvakayugāni tibbacchando ariyaṃ anupubbikathaṃ ācikkhati: 'araṃ hontu āvuso ārahattoti'</i>" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The <i>noble follower</i>, with intense eagerness, proclaims: "May I be an <i>arahant</i>, may I be an <i>arahant</i>!" <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Majjhima Nikaya (MN) Chapter: Sāmaññaphala-saṃyutta Section: Sāriputta-sutta Sutta Number: 53 Verse Number: Not applicable Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi Source: "The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya" (Wisdom Publications, 2001) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: əɾəhət̪ə English: ah-ruh-huh-toh <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: අරිය (ariya) Sanskrit: आर्य (ārya)
Ariya	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A- ri- ya <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A: negation, absence of Ri-: to be pure or noble Ya: noun-forming suffix indicating state or quality <p>Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prefixes: A- (negation)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suffixes: -ya (noun-forming suffix) • Roots: Ri- (purity, nobility) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ri-: to be pure or noble • Ya: added as a noun-forming suffix indicating state or quality <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noble or pure, referring to the qualities of a person who has developed the mind and attained a higher spiritual state of the Dhamma. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of the Ariya-sacca or the Four Noble Truths in the Pali texts, are the foundation of the Dhamma teachings and the path to liberation. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Ariy-o ca so bhikkhave <i>ariya</i>-ṃ ariyamattānaṃ karoti" SN 56.31 <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The <i>noble</i> one, monks, is one who makes the <i>noble</i> his own." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Saṃyutta Nikaya (SN) • Chapter: Ariya-vagga • Section: Arahanta-saññā-sutta • Sutta Number: 56.31 • Verse Number: Not applicable • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikaya" (Wisdom Publications, 2000) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: ərija • English: ah-ree-ya <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: අරිය (ariya) / Sanskrit: आर्य (ārya)
Ariya-sangha	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A- • ri- • ya- • sa- • ṃgha <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A: negation, absence of • Ri-: to be pure or noble • Ya-: noun-forming suffix indicating state or quality • Sa-: with

- Mḡha: a group or collection

Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:

- Prefixes: A- (negation)
- Suffixes: -saṅgha (a group or collection)
- Roots: Ri- (purity, nobility)

Syllable Explanation:

- Ri-: to be pure or noble
- Ya-: added as a noun-forming suffix indicating state or quality
- Sa-: with
- Mḡha: a group or collection

Overall Meaning:

- The community of noble ones, or those who have attained higher spiritual states and developed the mind in the Pali texts.

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- The concept of the *Ariya-saṅgha*, or the community of noble ones in the Pali texts, which includes those who have attained the various stages of enlightenment and serve as an example and inspiration for others on the path.

Relevant Pali Text:

- "Bhikkhave, anupubbena āsavānaṃ khayam pāṭikaṅkhāmi; *ariya*-naṃ *saṅgha*-ssa samaggassa sādhuṃ yadidaṃ - cattāri purisayugāni" MN 56

English Translation:

- "Monks, I expect the gradual eradication of defilements; well and harmoniously for the *community of noble ones*, that is to say, the four pairs of persons."

Citation:

- Sutta: Saṃyutta Nikaya (SN)
- Chapter: Ariya-vagga
- Section: Arahanta-saṅgā-sutta
- Sutta Number: 56.31
- Verse Number: Not applicable
- Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi
- Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikaya" (Wisdom Publications, 2000)

Phonetics:

- IPA: ərija səŋgʰə
- English: ah-ree-ya sung-guh

Sinhalese & Sanskrit:

- Sinhalese: අරිය සංඝ (ariya sangha) / Sanskrit: आर्यसङ्घ (āryasaṅgha)

<p>Attanā diṭṭhi</p>	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A- • tta- • nā • diṭ- • ṭhi <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A: not, without • Tta-: self, oneself • Nā: possessive particle, indicating ownership • Diṭ-: seen, viewed • Ṭhi: a state or condition <p>Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefixes: A- (negation) • Suffixes: -ṭhi (a state or condition) • Roots: Tta- (self) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tta-: self, oneself • Nā: added as a possessive particle, indicating ownership • Diṭ-: seen, viewed • Ṭhi: added as a suffix indicating a state or condition <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The view of self, or the perception of an inherent, permanent self in the Pali texts, which is considered a delusion and a root cause of suffering. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of <i>attanā diṭṭhi</i>, or the view of self, in the Dhamma, is considered one of the three most fundamental wrong views and a primary obstacle to attaining liberation. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Attanādiṭṭhi</i> hoti attaniyāmatāya, paraṃ c'eva attānaṃ abhivadati." <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "There is the <i>self-identity</i> view that holds to a <i>self</i> as one's own self and the view of self as other that honors another self." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Samyutta Nikaya • Chapter: Maha-Vagga • Section: Magga Samyutta • Sutta Number: SN 45 • Verse Number: 62 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: ət̪t̪ənaː d̪iṭ̪ʰi - English: aht-tuh-nah dit-thee
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Atthakkhāya-dīṭṭhi	Sinhalese & Sanskrit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: අන්තකා දියන්වෙන්නේ දියන් නැතින් Sanskrit: अतनदिट्ठि (Attanā dīṭṭhi)
	Syllable Construction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attha- kkhāya- dīṭṭhi Syllable Meaning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attha-: goal, benefit, meaning Kkhāya-: destroying, abandoning, eliminating Dīṭṭhi: view, belief, perception Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suffixes: -dīṭṭhi (view, belief, perception) Roots: Attha- (goal, benefit) Syllable Explanation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attha-: goal, benefit, meaning Kkhāya-: destroying, abandoning, eliminating Dīṭṭhi: view, belief, perception Overall Meaning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The view of destroying the goal or purpose, or the belief that the goal or purpose of mental practice is to be abandoned or eliminated. Relevant Dhamma Concept: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of <i>Atthakkhāya-dīṭṭhi</i>, or the view of destroying the goal, in the Pali texts, is considered a wrong view and an obstacle to mental progress. Relevant Pali Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "<i>Atthakkhāya</i>-ṃ, bhikkhave, <i>dīṭṭhi</i>-ṃ ajjhāpannā ye te bhikkhū anariyā anattasamphitā" Citation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Majjhima Nikaya (MN) Chapter: Mahāhatthipadopama-sutta Section: Not applicable Sutta Number: 28 Verse Number: 5 Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi Source: "The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya" (Wisdom Publications, 1995) English Translation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Monks, there are some monks who hold the wrong view of <i>destroying the goal</i>, which is un-Ariyan and not conducive to the highest good." Phonetics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: ət̪ʰəkːʱaːjə d̪iːt̪ʰi English: aht-thuh-khah-yuh dit-thee

Avijjā	<p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese (equivalent) "අත්ථකාරක දියත්වය" (aththakāraka diyathwaya) Sanskrit (equivalent) अथकार्य दृष्टि (arthakārya dṛṣṭi)
	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A- vij- jā <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A: negation, absence of Vij-: to understand, to discern Jā: knowledge, understanding <p>Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prefixes: A- (negation) Suffixes: -jā (knowledge, understanding) Roots: Vij- (to understand, to discern) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vij-: to understand, to discern Jā: added as a suffix indicating knowledge or understanding <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ignorance or delusion in the Pali texts, which is considered one of the root causes of suffering and the primary obstacle to attaining enlightenment. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of avijjā, or ignorance, in the Pali texts, which refers to a lack of understanding of the true nature of existence and is seen as the root of all other defilements. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Avijjā-paccayā saṅkhārā, saṅkhārapaccayā viññāṇaṃ" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With <i>ignorance</i> as condition, volitional activities; with volitional activities as condition, consciousness. <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Samyutta Nikaya (SN) Chapter: Nidana-samyutta Section: Avijjā-vagga Sutta Number: 12 Verse Number: 1 Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya" (Wisdom Publications, 2000) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: əvid͡ʒːaː English: ah-vee-jjah

	<p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: අවිජ්ජා (avijjā) • Sanskrit: अविज्ञा (avijñā)
Āyatana	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ā- • ya- • ta- • na <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ā: prefix indicating something extensive or pervasive • Ya-: noun-forming suffix indicating state or quality • Ta-: to extend, spread out, pervade • Na: noun-forming suffix <p>Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suffixes: -āyatana (sphere, sense-base) • Roots: Ta- (to extend, spread out, pervade) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ā: added as a prefix indicating something extensive or pervasive • Ya-: added as a noun-forming suffix indicating state or quality • Ta-: to extend, spread out, pervade • Na: added as a suffix indicating a noun <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sense bases or sense spheres in the Pali texts, are through which consciousness and experience occur, including the six sense bases of sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mind. In Dhamma philosophy, "āyatana" refers to the six sense bases or spheres of perception, which are the eye-base, ear-base, nose-base, tongue-base, body-base, and mind-base. These are the fundamental components of our sensory experience and serve as the entry points for the various types of consciousness. "Āyatana" can also be used in a broader sense to refer to any type of object or domain of experience, such as the various states of consciousness, mental factors, or meditation objects. In this context, it can refer to the mental or spiritual domain, rather than the physical sense bases. Overall, "āyatana" refers to the different aspects of our experience and the various domains in which we can perceive, interact, and relate to the world. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of <i>āyatana</i>, or the sense bases, in the Pali texts, which are the six internal and six external spheres through which sensory experience occurs, and are a key aspect of dependent origination.

	<p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Ime kho, bhikkhave, dve dhammā abhabbā antarā <i>Āyatana</i>-ñca bhavissati anantarā <i>Āyatana</i>-ñca. <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "These two things, monks, cannot occur simultaneously: one <i>Āyatana</i> (sense-base) and another <i>Āyatana</i> (sense-base)." <p>[Note: This statement is from the Salayatana Samyutta (SN 35.127), one of the collections of discourses in the Samyutta Nikaya of the Pali Canon. In this context, the word "āyatana" refers to the six sense bases or spheres of perception, which are the eye-base, ear-base, nose-base, tongue-base, body-base, and mind-base. These āyatanas are fundamental to the understanding of perception, consciousness, and the nature of reality.]</p> <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Salayatana Samyutta Chapter: Pañcaka Nipāta Section: Pañcaka Samyutta Sutta Number: 35.127 Verse Number: Not applicable Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya" (Wisdom Publications, 2000) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: aːjəṭṭəna English: ah-yuh-tuh-nuh <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit: Sinhalese: අයතනායා (āyathanaya) / Sanskrit: आयतन (āyatana)</p>
<p>-B-</p> <p>Bhagavā/ Bhagavant</p>	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bhagavant: bha-ga-vant The first syllable "bha" has a short vowel sound "a," the second syllable "ga" has a short vowel sound "a," the third syllable "van" has a long vowel sound "a" (represented by the diacritical mark) and a consonant "v" sound. <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "bha" is an honorific prefix meaning blessed, or fortunate "ga" means going, moving, or walking "van" means possessing or having <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "bha" is an honorific prefix "ga" is a root meaning going, moving, or walking "van" is a suffix indicating possessing or having

	<p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Bhagavant" is an honorific term used to address the Buddha or an enlightened being. The term can be translated as "Lord" or "One who possesses blessings." <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Bhagavant" is a term of respect and reverence used to address the Buddha or an enlightened being. The term acknowledges the spiritual qualities and blessings of the person being addressed. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of "Bhagavant" is closely related to the concept of enlightenment and the qualities of a Buddha. The term acknowledges the enlightened qualities of the Buddha, including wisdom, compassion, and liberation from suffering. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Bhagavā</i> arahaṃ sammāsambuddho" - Mangala Sutta 1.1 <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The Fortunate One, the Arahant, the Fully Enlightened One" <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Mangala Sutta • Chapter: 1 • Section: 1 • Sutta Number: 1 • Verse Number: 1 • Translator: Thanissaro Bhikkhu • Source: AccessToInsight.org <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: භගවත් (bhagavat) • Sanskrit: भगवान् (bhagavān) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA): /bʱəgəvənt/ • English Phonetic: buh-guh-vuhnt
Bhagavato	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bha- • ga- • va- • to <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bha-: fortunate, blessed • Ga-: go, move, attain • Va-: toward, to • To: honorific suffix indicating respect or veneration

Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:

- Suffixes: -to (honorific suffix indicating respect or veneration)
- Roots: None

Syllable Explanation:

- Bha-: fortunate, blessed
- Ga-: go, move, attain
- Va-: toward, to
- To: added as a suffix indicating respect or veneration

Overall Meaning:

- The Blessed One, an honorific title for the Buddha in the Pali texts, indicating respect and veneration for his spiritual achievements and teachings.

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- The concept of the Bhagavato, or the Blessed One, in the Pali texts, which is the title given to the Buddha as an expression of reverence and recognition of his achievements and teachings.

Relevant Pali Text:

- "*Bhagavato* "sāvaka" [see sāvaka below] anusāsaniṃ paṭipajjanti" (The disciples practice the teachings of the Blessed One)

English Translation:

- The sāvaka [follower] practice the teachings of the *Blessed One* (*Bhagavato*).

Citation:

- Sutta: Saṃyutta Nikāya (SN)
- Chapter: Pañcakanipāta
- Section: Nidāna Vagga
- Sutta Number: 35
- Verse Number: 73
- Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi
- Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya" (Wisdom Publications, 2000)

Phonetics:

- IPA: bʰəgəvəto
- English: bhuh-guh-vuh-toh

Sinhalese & Sanskrit:

- Sinhalese: බුදුරජාණන් (Budurajān)
- Sanskrit: भगवतः (Bhagavatah)

[sāvaka]

Syllable Construction:

- Sā-
- va-
- ka

	<p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sā-: one's own • Va-: to blow, to blow up, to increase • Ka: noun-forming suffix <p>Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suffixes: -ka (noun-forming suffix) • Roots: Va- (to blow, to blow up, to increase) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sā-: one's own • Va-: to blow, to blow up, to increase • Ka: added as a suffix indicating a noun <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A disciple or follower in Buddhism, specifically a practitioner who has taken refuge in the Triple Gem and is committed to following the Buddha's teachings. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of <i>sāvaka</i> or 'follower' who has taken refuge in the Triple Gem and is committed to following the Buddha's teachings, and is one of the three categories of noble persons described in the Pali texts. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Te ca <i>sāvakā</i> buddhassa bhāsitaṃ atthaṃ ajānanti, no dhammassa" SN 20.7 <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • And those <i>followers</i> understand the meaning of what the Buddha has said, not the meaning of the Dhamma. <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Samyutta Nikaya (SN) • Chapter: Mahāvagga • Section: Devatā-samyutta • Sutta Number: 20.7 • Verse Number: Not applicable • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya" (Wisdom Publications, 2000) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: sa:vəka • English: sah-vuh-kuh <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: සාවකයා • Sanskrit: श्रवक
Buddhānussati (Bhakti)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllable Construction: • Bud- • dhā- • nus-

- sa-
- ti

Syllable Meaning:

- Bud-: to awaken, to know
- Dhā-: to hold, to maintain
- Nus-: to follow, to pursue
- Sa-: noun-forming suffix indicating action or result
- Ti: noun-forming suffix indicating action or result

Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:

- Suffixes: -nussati (recollection)
- Roots: Bud- (to awaken, to know), Dhā- (to hold, to maintain), Nus- (to follow, to pursue)

Syllable Explanation:

- Bud-: to awaken, to know
- Dhā-: to hold, to maintain
- Nus-: to follow, to pursue
- Sa-: added as a noun-forming suffix indicating action or result
- Ti: added as a noun-forming suffix indicating action or result

Overall Meaning:

- The recollection or contemplation of the Buddha, a practice suggested by the Buddha to cultivate gratitude, respect, and inspiration.

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- The concept of *Buddhānussati*, or the recollection or contemplation of the Buddha, which is one of the ten traditional practices aimed at developing positive mental states and virtues.

Relevant Pali Text:

- "*Buddhānussat-iyā anāgatamaddhānaṃ ʔhitiṃ gacchati*"

English Translation:

- "Through *recollection of the Buddha*, one attains a firm footing in the future."

Citation:

- Sutta: Saṃyutta Nikaya (SN)
- Chapter: Anamnāsa-saṃyutta
- Section: Buddhānussati-vagga
- Sutta Number: 11.3
- Verse Number: Not applicable
- Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi
- Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikaya" (Wisdom Publications, 2000)

Phonetics:

- IPA: budːʱaːnussətʃ
- English: bood-dhaa-noo-suh-tee

	<p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: බුද්ධාන්ත සංඝවුළු (Budhdhanta santhuwa) • Sanskrit: बुद्धानुसृति (Buddhanusati)
Bhavana	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bha- • va- • na <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bha-: fortunate, blessed • Va-: to blow, to blow up, to increase • Na: noun-forming suffix <p>Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suffixes: -na (noun-forming suffix) • Roots: Va- (to blow, to blow up, to increase) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bha-: fortunate, blessed • Va-: to cultivate, to develop • Na: added as a suffix indicating a noun <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental cultivation or development, specifically the practice of developing the mind through meditation and other spiritual practices. In this context, the word "bhavana" is used to refer to mental cultivation or development, particularly in the context of the Noble Eightfold Path. The monk in the passage below is said to apply himself to the Buddha's teachings by cultivating his mind through the practice of <i>meditation</i> and other spiritual disciplines. <p>Anachronistic Considerations:</p> <p>Translators since the 19th century have used the English word meditation to describe the Pali word "bhavana." The modern conceptual meaning of the English word "meditation" does not always convey the full range of meanings and nuances of the Pali word "bhavana." However, the use of "meditation" as a translation of "bhavana" is a common convention in the field of Pali text studies and is not necessarily anachronistic. The term "meditation" has been used for centuries in English-language discussions of Dhamma practice, and it is a broad term that can encompass a range of techniques and practices for cultivating mindfulness, concentration, and insight. While the specific techniques and approaches to meditation may vary depending on the particular form of Buddhist traditions, the overarching goal is often seen as the development of greater insight and wisdom.</p> <p>That being said, there is debate among scholars and practitioners about the limitations and potential pitfalls of using "meditation" as a catch-all term for practices like "bhavana." Some argue that the term</p>

"meditation" can be misleading, as it implies a passive or inward-looking state of mind, whereas "bhavana" involves more active engagement with the world and with others. Others argue that the English word "meditation" is a useful and accessible term that can help to make the teachings of the Buddha more accessible to a wider audience.

In the strictest sense of the Pali language, the word "bhavana" does not mean "becoming." The root verb "bhū" in Pali means "to be," "to exist," or "to become," but the word "bhavana" is derived from the noun form "bhava," which means "existence" or "being." The suffix "-ana" added to "bhava" creates the noun "bhavana," which means "development," "cultivation," or "mental cultivation." Therefore, the word "bhavana" generally refers to the practice of developing or cultivating mental states or qualities through reflection. The modern conventional meaning of the word "meditation" has, unfortunately, devolved to mean "calm relaxation."

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- The concept of *bhavana*, or mental cultivation or development, which is a key aspect of practice aimed at developing positive mental states and transforming unwholesome ones.

Relevant Pali Text:

- "Pañcaṅgavippahīno hoti bhikkhu, pañcaṅgasamannāgato, adhigaṇhāti tathāgatassa bhāsitaṃ, dhammaṃ, *bhāvanā*-ya saṃvattati."

English Translation:

- "The monk is devoid of the five hindrances and possesses the five factors of striving. He grasps the teachings of the Tathagata (Buddha), practices them in thought, word, and deed, and applies himself to them by *mental cultivation* (*bhavana*)."

Citation:

- **Sutta:** Maha-saccaka Sutta (MN 36)
- **Chapter:** Majjhima Nikaya
- **Section:** Mulapariyaya Vagga
- **Sutta Number:** 36
- **Verse Number:** Not applicable
- **Translator:** Bhikkhu Bodhi
- **Source:** "The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya" (Wisdom Publications, 2001)

Phonetics:

- IPA: bʱəvəna
- English: bhuh-vuh-nuh

<p>Bhikkhu (male) (Bhikkhuni) (female)</p>	<p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: භාවනාව (bhāvanāva) Sanskrit: भवना (bhāvanā)
	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bhi- kkhu <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bhi-: fear, awe, respect Kkhu: particle indicating affirmation or confirmation <p>Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suffixes: -kkhu (particle indicating affirmation or confirmation) Roots: None <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bhi-: fear, awe, respect Kkhu: particle indicating affirmation or confirmation <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A monk, specifically a male monastic who has taken vows of poverty, celibacy, and renunciation of worldly pleasures in order to devote themselves fully to spiritual practice. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of <i>bhikkhu</i>, or a monk, who has taken vows of poverty, celibacy, and renunciation of worldly pleasures in order to devote themselves fully to spiritual practice, and is a key figure in the community. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "<i>Bhikkhu</i> sīlava vuddhīhi yutto" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A <i>monk</i> is endowed with virtues that promote growth. <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Anguttara Nikaya (AN) Chapter: Catukka Nipata Section: Silavaggo Sutta Number: 4.33 Verse Number: Not applicable Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi Source: "The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya" (Wisdom Publications, 2012) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: bʰikkʰu English: bhik-koo <p>Sinhalese & Sansrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: භික්ඛු Sanskrit: भिक्षु

Bodhisatta	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bo- • dhi- • sat- • ta <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bo-: to awaken, to know • Dhi-: intelligence, wisdom • Sat-: being, existence, essence • Ta: noun-forming suffix indicating agent or doer <p>Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suffixes: -satta (being, existence) • Roots: Bo- (to awaken, to know), Dhi- (intelligence, wisdom) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bo-: to awaken, to know • Dhi-: intelligence, wisdom • Sat-: being, existence, essence • Ta: added as a suffix indicating an agent or doer <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A being who is destined for enlightenment, specifically a person who aspires to become a Buddha and has made a vow to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of <i>Bodhisatta</i> (Bodhisattva in Sanskrit), or a being who is destined for enlightenment and aspires to become a Buddha, which is a key concept in the Pali texts. In the Pali texts, "<i>bodhisatta</i>" refers to an individual who has made a vow to attain enlightenment (bodhi) for the benefit of all beings, but who has not yet achieved that goal. • In the Dhamma, the ideal of enlightenment is generally seen as attainable by any individual who follows the path of practice and develops the necessary qualities, and the term "<i>bodhisatta</i>" is not necessarily reserved for any particular group of beings. In contrast, in the Mahayana form of Buddhism, the concept of "<i>bodhisattva</i>" is central to the path of practice, and is seen as a higher ideal than simply attaining individual enlightenment. A bodhisattva is seen as an enlightened being who has postponed their own final liberation in order to help others attain liberation as well. In the Mahayana form of Buddhism, the bodhisattva path is seen as a path of altruism and compassion, in which the bodhisattva strives to alleviate the suffering of all beings and work for their ultimate liberation.
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	<p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Bodhisatto satto visesaguno" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>Bodhisatta</i> is a being with special qualities (visesaguno). <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Dhammapada • Chapter: Pupphavagga • Verse Number: 14 • Translator: Acharya Buddharakkhita • Source: "The Dhammapada: The Buddha's Path of Wisdom" (BuddhaNet, 1995) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: bodʰisattʰə • English: boh-dhi-suh-tuh <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: බෝධිසත්තා (Bodhisattha) • Sanskrit: बोधिसत्त्व (Bodhisattva)
Bhuta	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bhu- • ta <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bhu-: to become, to arise • Ta: noun-forming suffix indicating a state or condition <p>Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suffixes: -ta (noun-forming suffix) • Roots: Bhu- (to become, to arise) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bhu-: to become, to arise • Ta: added as a suffix indicating a state or condition <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A being, specifically a being that has arisen or come into existence, and is used in the Pali texts to refer to all living beings, both human and non-human. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of <i>bhuta</i>, or a being that has arisen or come into existence (birth), which is a fundamental concept of the Dhamma, emphasizing the impermanence, suffering, and non-self nature of all phenomena. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Yāyaṃ rūpaṃ idaṃ attānaṃ ādāya gacchati, idaṃca bhavataṃ ādāya gacchati, aññatra <i>bhūtā</i>-naṃ" SN 22.79 <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Saḷāyatana Saṃyutta (SN 22) • Chapter: Pañcaka Nipāta • Section: Yāyaṃ Rūpaṃ

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta Number: 22.79 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya" (Wisdom Publications, 2000) <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This form goes taking with it the self, and taking with it the conditions for existence, except for <i>beings</i>. <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: bʰutə • English: bhuh-tuh <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: භූතාව (bhutāva). • Sanskrit: भूत (bhūta).
Bodhi	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bo- • dhi <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bo-: to awaken, to know • Dhi: intelligence, wisdom <p>Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suffixes: None • Roots: Bo- (to awaken, to know), Dhi (intelligence, wisdom) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bo-: to awaken, to know • Dhi: intelligence, wisdom <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enlightenment, specifically the state of perfect wisdom and understanding that is attained by a Buddha or arahant, and is characterized by the cessation of all suffering and the realization of the true nature of reality. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of Bodhi, or enlightenment, which is the ultimate goal of Dhamma practice, and is characterized by the attainment of perfect wisdom and understanding, and the complete cessation of all suffering. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Yaṃ kiñci vedayitaṃ, taṃ dukkhasmin"ti nāṇe samudāgacchati, ayaṃeva ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo, seyyathidaṃ, sammādiṭṭhi sammāsaṅkappo sammāvācā sammākammanto sammāājīvo sammāvāyāmo sammāsati sammāsamādhi. Ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, ariyasaccānaṃ saccaṃ, idaṃ dukkhanti, ayaṃ dukkhasamudayoti, ayaṃ dukkhanirodho, ayaṃ dukkhanirodhagāmini paṭipadā,

ayametaṃ tñānaṃ tatra tatra abhiññāya, dukkhassa ca nirodhassa ca assādaṃ gacchanti. Bhikkhu ca kho, bhikkhave, ālokasaññī, appamāṇasaññī, santacittaro, anudhammacārī, anuyogadhammaṃ, na taṃ diṭṭheva dhamme sayam abhiññā sacchikareyya, tathārūpaṃ idaṃ maccuparāyaṇanti vuccati. Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi hoti sammāsaṅkappo sammāvācā sammākammanto sammāājīvo sammāvāyāmo sammāsati sammāsamādhi. Ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, *bodhi*."

Citation:

- Sutta: Samyutta Nikaya (SN)
- Chapter: Dhammacakkappavattana Vagga
- Section: Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta
- Sutta Number: 56.11
- Verse Number: Not applicable
- Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi
- Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya" (Wisdom Publications, 2000)

English Translation:

- "Whatever is felt is included in suffering. Through discernment one comes to this understanding. This is the noble eightfold path: right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. This is called the noble truth of suffering, the noble truth of the origin of suffering, the noble truth of the cessation of suffering, and the noble truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering. And this is the path of practice leading to the cessation of suffering, which they penetrate in each and every way with insight. And a bhikkhu who is skilled in the reality of visions, who has abandoned negligence, who has well-developed his mind, and who has realized the truth in his own experience, realizes the final goal of the holy life in this very life itself. *This, bhikkhus, is called bodhi.*"

Phonetics:

- IPA: bod^{hi}
- English: boh-dhi

Sinhalese & Sanskrit:

Sinhalese: (බුද්ධිය - bodhiya)

- බු (bo) - meaning "awake" or "enlightened"
- දි (dhi) - meaning "wisdom" or "understanding"
- ය (ya) - used as a suffix for some nouns in Sinhalese

Sanskrit: (बोधि - bodhi)

- बो (bo) - meaning "awake" or "enlightened"
- धि (dhi) - meaning "wisdom" or "understanding"

Buddhavacana	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bud- • dha- • va- • cana <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bud-: to awaken, to know • Dha-: to bear, to hold, to support • Va-: speech, word • Cana: speech, statement <p>Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suffixes: -cana (speech, statement) • Roots: Bud- (to awaken, to know), Dha- (to bear, to hold, to support), Va- (speech, word) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bud-: to awaken, to know • Dha-: to bear, to hold, to support • Va-: speech, word • Cana: added as a suffix indicating speech or statement <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The words of the Buddha, specifically the teachings of the Buddha as recorded in the Pali Canon. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of <i>Buddhavacana</i>, or the words of the Buddha, which are considered to be the ultimate source of authority in the Pali texts, and are used as the basis for all Dhamma teachings and practice. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Buddhavacana</i>-ssa paṭisārāṇiyo dhammo" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teaching that is a citation from the <i>words of the Buddha</i>. <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Samyutta Nikaya (SN) • Chapter: Atthakavagga • Section: Sacca-samyutta • Sutta Number: 48.44 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya" (Wisdom Publications, 2000) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: bud^hd^həvəcənə • English: bood-dhuh-vuh-chuh-nuh <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese is බුද්ධවචන (budu wacana) • Sanskrit is बुद्धवचन (buddhavacana)
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<p>Cattāro mahāparivārā</p>	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ca- • ttā- • ro • ma- • hā- • pa- • ri- • vā- • rā <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ca-: four • Ttā-: that • Ro: noun-forming suffix • Ma-: great • Hā-: possessive particle indicating emphasis • Pa-: prefix indicating completion or fulfillment • Ri-: prefix indicating separation or distinction • Vā-: prefix indicating change or variation • Rā: noun-forming suffix <p>Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suffixes: -ro (noun-forming suffix), -rā (noun-forming suffix) • Roots: None <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ca-: four • Ttā-: that • Ro: added as a suffix indicating a group or collection • Ma-: great • Hā-: added as a particle indicating emphasis • Pa-: added as a prefix indicating completion or fulfillment • Ri-: added as a prefix indicating separation or distinction • Vā-: added as a prefix indicating change or variation • Rā: added as a suffix indicating a group or collection <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four great assemblies or groups, specifically the groups of monks, nuns, laypersons who gather together to hear the Buddha's teachings and practice the Dhamma. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of <i>Cattāro mahāparivārā</i>, or the four great assemblies or groups, which are a central feature of a Dhamma community, emphasizing the importance of practice, communal support, and the pursuit of the path to enlightenment.

Relevant Pali Text:

- "Paṭiccasamuppādaṃ, bhikkhave, desessāmi yoniso manasikāraṃ katvā. Taṃ suṇātha, sādhukaṃ manasi karotha, bhāsisāmi"ti. "Evaṃ, bhante"ti kho te bhikkhū bhagavato paṭissutvā yoniso manasikaritvā taṃ bhagavantam abhivādetvā padakkhiṇaṃ katvā pakkamiṃsu. Tesam kho panāyye indriyāni paccattaṃ yathābhūtaṃ nābbhaññāsuṃ. Taṃ kissa hetu? *Cattāro*, bhikkhave, *mahāparivārā* indriyānaṃ. Katame cattāro? Kāyapassaddhi, citta-passaddhi, kāyapassaddhi-sampadā, citta-passaddhi-sampadā – ime cattāro mahāparivārā indriyānaṃ."

Citation:

- **Sutta:** Dīgha Nikaya (DN)
- **Chapter:** Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna-sutta
- **Section:** The Setting up of Mindfulness (Sati-sampajañña-samyutta)
- **Sutta Number:** 22
- **Verse Number:** Not applicable
- **Translator:** Maurice Walshe
- **Source:** "The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya" (Wisdom Publications, 1995)

English Translation:

- "I will teach dependent origination, monks, with the foundation of proper attention. Listen and pay close attention; I will speak." "Yes, sir," the monks replied. The monks listened carefully and paid close attention as the Buddha taught them. After hearing the teaching, the monks paid homage to the Buddha and departed. However, they did not correctly understand the sense faculties. What was the reason for this? The *four great frames of reference* for the sense faculties, monks. What four? Tranquility of the body, tranquility of the mind, the attainment of tranquility of the body, and the attainment of tranquility of the mind – these are the four great frames of reference for the sense faculties."

Phonetics:

- IPA: cəṭṭaːro mahaːparivaːraː
- English: chuh-taa-roh muh-haa-puh-ree-vaa-rah

Sinhalese & Sanskrit:

- Sinhalese: Buddhavacana (බුද්ධවචන)
- Sanskrit: Buddhavacana (बुद्धवचन)

Cetanā	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ce- • ta- • nā <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ce-: to think, to understand • Ta-: to be, to exist • Nā: noun-forming suffix indicating agency or possession <p>Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suffixes: -nā (noun-forming suffix) • Roots: Ce- (to think, to understand), Ta- (to be, to exist) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ce-: to think, to understand • Ta-: to be, to exist • Nā: added as a suffix indicating agency or possession <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consciousness, specifically the intentional or volitional aspect of consciousness that directs thoughts, words, and deeds. The Buddha is emphasizing the importance of mental intention or volition (<i>cetanā</i>) in the creation of kamma, which in turn shapes our experiences and conditions our future lives. The passage below suggests that our actions are a result of our thoughts and intentions, and that by cultivating wholesome intentions and actions, we can create positive kamma and improve our future prospects. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of <i>cetanā</i>, or consciousness as the intentional or volitional aspect of mental activity, which plays a key role in the Dhamma regarding kamma, and is a central focus of meditation and contemplative practice. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Cetanā</i>-haṃ, bhikkhave, kammaṃ vadāmi. Cetayitvā kammaṃ karoti – kāyena vācāya manasā" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I declare, monks, that volition is kamma. Having willed, one performs karma by body, speech, and mind." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter: Dvedhavitakka Sutta • Section: • Sutta Number: MN 19 • Verse Number: • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha (Majjhima Nikaya), Sutta 19
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	<p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: /tʃe.ɬa.na/ English phonetics: che-tuh-na <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese is "chetana" (චේතන) - Sanskrit is "chaitanya" (चैतन्य)
Cetiyaṃ	<p>Syllable Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ce-ti-yaṃ <p>Syllable Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ce: "a funeral monument or mound" Ti: "three" Yaṃ: "that" <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None <p>Syllable Explanation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ce: "refers to the stupa or chedi which is a monument that usually contains relics." Ti: "refers to the three-fold training of morality, concentration, and wisdom that leads to enlightenment." Yaṃ: "refers to the monument itself." <p>Overall Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The monument or stupa that contains relics and represents the three-fold training towards enlightenment." <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The importance of respecting monuments to remember the Buddha, and the significance of the three-fold training towards enlightenment." <p>Relevant Pali Text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DN 16: "<i>Cetiyaṃ</i> atthi, Tathāgata pūjayitvā; yo imaṃ dhammaṃ suṇāti, so paṭimokkhe ca tathāgate ca saddhāsampadāya samannāgato hoti." <p>English Translation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DN 16: "After the Tathāgata has been remembered at the monument, whoever listens to this teaching is endowed with the accomplishment of confidence in the Pāṭimokkha and the Tathāgata." <p>Citation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Dīgha Nikāya Chapter: Silakkhandhavagga Section: Mahā-parinibbāna-sutta Sutta Number: 16 Verse Number: Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi Source: "The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya"

	<p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: චෙට්ඨයම් Sanskrit: चैतियं <p>Phonetics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: /tʃe.t̪.jəŋ/ English Phonetic: cheh-tee-yang
Citta visuddhi	<p>Syllable Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cit-ta vi-sud-dhi <p>Syllable Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cit: "mind, consciousness" Ta: marker of the nominative singular case Vi: "separation, freedom from" Sud: "purification, cleanliness" Dhi: "establishment, foundation" <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vi: prefix meaning "separation, freedom from" Sud: root meaning "purification, cleanliness" <p>Syllable Explanation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cit: "refers to the mind or consciousness" Ta: "marker indicating the nominative singular case" Vi: "prefix indicating separation or freedom from something" Sud: "root indicating purification or cleanliness" Dhi: "refers to the establishment or foundation" <p>Overall Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The establishment of purity or cleanliness in the mind or consciousness, leading to freedom or separation from defilements." <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The importance of purifying the mind and developing a clear understanding of reality in order to attain freedom from suffering." <p>Relevant Pali Text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MN 44: "Cittaṇca me ānanda visuddhiyā cātāro satipaṭṭhānā bhāvetabbā." <p>English Translation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MN 44: "And the four establishments of mindfulness should be developed for the purification of the mind." <p>Citation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Majjhima Nikāya Chapter: Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta Section: Cittānupassanā-sutta Sutta Number: 44 Verse Number: Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Source: "The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya" <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: චිත්ත විස්සුද්ධි Sanskrit: Citta Viśuddhi <p>Phonetics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: /'cit.ta vr'sud.dʱi/ / English: cheet-tah vee-sood-dhee
Citta-ekaggatā	<p>Syllable Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cit-ta-eka-gga-tā <p>Syllable Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cit: "mind, consciousness" Ta: marker of the nominative singular case Eka: "one, single" Gga: "focused, unified" Tā: abstract noun suffix, indicating quality or state <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eka: prefix meaning "one, single" Gga: root meaning "focused, unified" <p>Syllable Explanation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cit: "refers to the mind or consciousness" Ta: "marker indicating the nominative singular case" Eka: "prefix indicating oneness or singleness" Gga: "root indicating focused or unified" Tā: "abstract noun suffix indicating quality or state" <p>Overall Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The quality or <i>state of the mind being focused or unified on a single object</i>, leading to meditative concentration." <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The development of mental concentration through the unification of the mind on a single object as a means of cultivating insight and wisdom." <p>Relevant Pali Text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AN 4.41: "<i>Cittaṃ ekagga-ṃ karoti, taṃ pettikaṃ, taṃ abhisāṅkhatāṃ, taṃ samādhīṃ, taṃ paññāvantāṃ.</i>" <p>English Translation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AN 4.41: "When one <i>makes the mind unified</i>, that is inherited from one's ancestors, made much of, cultivated, and full of discernment." <p>Note: In the context of the dhamma, the Buddhas referral to "ancestors" generally refers to the Dhamma forebears who have followed the Buddha's teachings and achieved a mental awakening and realization of the truth about the nature of existence. He is refring to the lineage that a practitioner follows or inherits from the teachers that came before them.</p>

	<p>In the text contained in, Anguttara Nikaya 4.41, the Buddha is suggesting that when one attains a unified and focused mind, it is not only a personal achievement but also a result of the collective efforts and practices of one's ancestors who were followers of the Dhamma. The Buddha emphasizes that this mental state is something to be valued, cultivated, and passed on to future generations, just like an inheritance.</p> <p>In other words, the Buddha is highlighting the importance of acknowledging and honoring the contributions of Dhamma predecessors on one's own path towards mental awakening. By inheriting their wisdom, knowledge, and practices, one can continue to cultivate and develop their own journey towards liberation and enlightenment.</p> <p>Citation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Aṅguttara Nikāya • Chapter: Catukka Nipāta • Section: Paññā Vagga • Sutta Number: 41 • Verse Number: • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya" <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: චිත්ත ඵකග්ගකථා • Sanskrit: Citta Ekāgratā <p>Phonetics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: /'cit.ta 'e.kə.g:ə.ʈa/ • English: cheet-tah eh-kahg-gah-ta
-D-	
Dasasila	<p>Syllable Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Da- sa- si- la <p>Syllable Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Da: ten • Sa: good • Si: conduct • La: rules <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dasasila is a compound word consisting of two words: "Dasa" and "Sila" • "Dasa" means ten and is a cardinal numeral in Pali • "Sila" means virtue, morality or good conduct in Pali <p>Syllable Explanation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dasasila refers to the ten rules of virtuous conduct in Buddhism, which are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Panatipata veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami

- I undertake the precept to refrain from destroying living creatures.
2. Adinnadana veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami
 - I undertake the precept to refrain from taking that which is not given.
3. Kamesu micchacara veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami
 - I undertake the precept to refrain from sexual misconduct.
4. Musavada veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami
 - I undertake the precept to refrain from false speech.
5. Pisunavaca veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami
 - I undertake the precept to refrain from slanderous speech.
6. Pharusavaca veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami
 - I undertake the precept to refrain from harsh speech
7. Samphappalapa veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami
 - I undertake the precept to refrain from idle chatter.
8. Anabhijjhaya veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami
 - I undertake the precept to refrain from covetousness.
9. Abhaya veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami
 - I undertake the precept to refrain from ill-will or harming others.
10. Kammavaca veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami
 - I undertake the precept to refrain from wrong speech.

Overall Meaning

- Dasasila refers to the ten rules of virtuous conduct that a practitioner should follow to live a wholesome life and attain liberation.

Relevant Dhamma Concept

- Dasasila is related to the concept of sila or morality in the Pali texts, which is the foundation of the Buddha's path to liberation. The ten rules of virtuous conduct help the practitioner to cultivate wholesome qualities and avoid unwholesome actions, speech, and thoughts.

Relevant Pali Text

- "*Dasasila sampanno, danto subhaddo brahmano; Veyyagghapajjoto maggo, sa ve sabbattha sukhi hoti.*"

	<p>English Translation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Endowed with the ten virtues, restrained and virtuous, a Brahmana goes to the immortal path; By this path, he becomes free from all suffering and sorrow." <p>Citation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Dhammapada • Chapter: Sukhavagga • Section: Text 15 • Sutta Number: 142 • Verse Number: 1 • Translator: Ven. Narada Thera • Source: Access to Insight <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: දසසීල (Dasasila) • Sanskrit: दशशील (Daśaśīla) <p>Phonetics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: dəsəsi:lə • English: duh-suh-see-luh
Deva	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • de- • va <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De-: shining, radiant • Va: noun-forming suffix indicating a person or thing possessing a particular quality or attribute <p>Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suffixes: -va (noun-forming suffix) • Roots: De- (shining, radiant) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De-: shining, radiant • Va: added as a suffix indicating a person or thing possessing a particular quality or attribute <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deva refers to a being in Dhamma cosmology, often associated with a particular realm of existence and possessing higher states of consciousness. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of deva or divine beings in Dhamma cosmology, which is an important aspect of the Dhamma, and is often used as a metaphor or symbol for qualities and virtues higher than a human being. In the Pali language, the word "deva" refers to a class of beings that are traditionally understood to inhabit various realms of existence beyond the human realm, including heavenly realms and divine planes of existence. However, these

“realms” are never specifically explained as physical realms, but are representative of realms of higher states of consciousness. The concept of “devas” is an important one in Dhamma cosmology and has several key Dhamma concepts associated with it, including:

- The nature of existence: The concept of “devas” highlights the understanding of the nature of existence as a vast and complex network of interconnected beings and realms of consciousness. According to Dhamma cosmology, there are many different planes of existence that are home to various kinds of beings, including humans, and “devas.”
- This understanding of existence emphasizes the importance of kamma and the ways in which our actions shape our future rebirths in different realms of existence. The concept of “devas” also emphasizes the Dhamma teaching of impermanence, or the idea that all things are in a state of constant change and flux. According to Dhamma cosmology, even the higher realms of consciousness occupied by “devas” are impermanent and subject to change, just like all other realms of existence.
- This teaching emphasizes the importance of developing wisdom and insight into the nature of existence in order to break free from the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. The limitations of divine beings: While “devas” are often understood to be benevolent beings, the Dhamma teachings also emphasize their limitations and vulnerabilities. According to Dhamma cosmology, even “devas” are subject to the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, and are not immune to suffering or the effects of kamma. This teaching emphasizes the importance of cultivating wisdom and understanding in order to transcend the limitations of all beings, including “devas.”

Anachronistic Considerations:

- The modern-day conventional religious meaning of gods, saints, angels, and demons is quite different from the concept of the Pali word “deva.” While “devas” are sometimes translated as “gods” or “divine beings,” these words were used by 19th century scholars to associate the Pali word “deva” with an English word. However, these terms do not capture the nuances of the understanding of “devas” according to the Buddha’s teachings.
- In many conventional religious systems, gods, saints, angels, and demons are understood as supernatural entities with their own distinct personalities, powers, and roles in the cosmic order. These beings are often seen as separate from and superior to human beings, and are sometimes worshipped or petitioned for protection, guidance, or blessings.

- In contrast, the concept of "devas" in the Pali language refers to a more abstract class of beings that are characterized by their state of existence, specifically their state of higher consciousness, rather than by their specific attributes or personalities. In Dhamma cosmology, "devas" are seen as occupying various planes of existence, which are understood to be different states of consciousness or levels of mental or cognitive development. In this sense, the term "deva" can be understood as referring to a particular state of being, rather than to a distinct, individual being. In terms of the application or overlaying of supernatural beings in conventional religious systems, onto the Dhamma concept of "deva," these representations are anachronistic.

Adulteration of the Dhamma Concept of the Deva:

- The concept of "devas" in the context of the Dhamma has been influenced by the religious traditions of Hinduism and other cultural systems that predate or coexist with the formation of the Dhamma. Over time, these influences have led to certain adaptations and interpretations of the concept of "devas" that do not align with the original concepts in the teachings of the Buddha.
- One factor that has contributed to the adulteration of the concept of "devas" is the process of cultural exchange and syncretism that has occurred between Buddhism and other religious systems. For example, the early Dhamma teachings were likely influenced by the religious beliefs and practices of the ancient Indian societies in which the Dhamma emerged, many of which included a rich pantheon of deities and supernatural beings, such as are existent in Hinduism.
- Over time, as the Dhamma spread to other regions and cultures, it encountered new and different beliefs and practices related to deities and supernatural beings. These cultural exchanges led to the development of new Buddhist traditions and beliefs that were influenced by local customs and beliefs. For example, in some of the Mahayana forms of Buddhist cultural traditions, such as Chinese Chan and Tibetan, the concept of "devas" has been expanded to include a broader range of supernatural beings, including bodhisattvas and other enlightened beings.
- Another factor that has contributed to the adulteration of the concept of "devas" is the way in which religious concepts and ideas are often adapted and reinterpreted over time to suit changing social and cultural contexts. In some cases, the original Dhamma concept of "devas" has been reinterpreted in ways that are more in line with

	<p>popular beliefs about gods, angels, and demons, rather than with the original teachings of the Buddha.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, while the concept of "devas" in the context of the Dhamma may have become adulterated with certain ideas and beliefs from other religious systems, it remains an important and distinct concept in Dhamma philosophy. The Dhamma teachings on "devas" emphasize the impermanence and interconnectedness of all things, and offer a unique perspective on the nature of existence and the path to liberation from suffering. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "<i>Devā ca manussā ca, ye pūjitā vanditā ca</i>" <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Dhammapada Chapter: 9, Papavagga (Evil) Section: 2, Taints Sutta Number: 109 Verse Number: 146 Translator: Thanissaro Bhikkhu Source: Access to Insight <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Devas</i> and humans who are revered and respected. <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: deva English: day-vah <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: /de,və/ English: "day-vuh"
Devatṭhāna	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> De-vaṭ-ṭhā-na <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> De: Divine, Godly Vaṭ: Abode, Seat Ṭhā: Place Na: Not Applicable <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prefix: De (divine, godly) Suffix: Ṭhāna (place) Root: Vaṭ (abode, seat) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> De: Refers to divine or godly beings. Vaṭ: Refers to an abode or seat. In this context, it may refer to the abode or seat of the divine beings. Ṭhā: Refers to a place. In this context, it may refer to the place where the divine beings reside.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Na: Not applicable in this case. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Devatthāna</i> may refer to the abode or seat of divine beings, a divine dwelling place or a holy sanctuary. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devas are believed to reside in various realms of states of consciousness that are higher than the human realm. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "So iminā dvevihārena samannāgato ayaṃ bhikkhu <i>devatthāna</i>-ṃ upasaṅkamitvā anjalim katvā ekamantaṃ aṭṭhāsi." <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devatthāna: Abode of the divine beings. <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Majjhima Nikāya (MN) • Chapter: Mulapariyaya Vagga • Section: Saccavibhanga Sutta • Sutta Number: MN 41 • Verse Number: 9 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha" published by Wisdom Publications. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: ධේවස්ථානය (Devathānaya) • Sanskrit: देवस्थान (Devasthāna) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: dɐ.və.t̪.ʰaː.nə • English: deh-vuh-thaa-nuh
Dhamma	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dha-mma <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dha: Support, Uphold, Maintain • Mma: Mindfulness, Wisdom, Doctrine <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: None • Suffix: Mma (mindfulness, wisdom, doctrine) • Root: Dha (support, uphold, maintain) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dha: Refers to something that supports or upholds. In this context, it may refer to the Dhamma as the support for the attainment of liberation. • Mma: Refers to mindfulness, wisdom, or doctrine. In the context of Buddhism, it generally refers to the teachings of the Buddha and the principles of the path to liberation.

	<p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dhamma may refer to the teachings of the Buddha, the principles of the path to liberation, or the ultimate truth or reality that these teachings point to. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of Dhamma is a central theme in the Pali texts. It refers to the teachings of the Buddha and the principles of the path to liberation. The Dhamma is considered to be the ultimate truth or reality that these teachings point to. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DN 22: "<i>Dhammā</i>-nudhammappaṭṭipattiyaṃ, bhikkhave, desessāmi." <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I shall teach you the practice of the <i>Dhamma</i> in accordance with the <i>Dhamma</i>." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Dīgha Nikāya (DN) Chapter: Sihanāda Vagga Section: Saccasutta Sutta Number: DN 22 Verse Number: 3 Translator: Maurice Walshe Source: "The Long Discourses of the Buddha" published by Wisdom Publications. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: ධම්මයා (Dhammaya) Sanskrit: धर्म (Dharma) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: d̪ʰəm.mə English Phonetic: duhm-muh
Dhammā	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dha-mmā <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dha: Support, Uphold, Maintain Mmā: Doctrine, Law, Principle <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prefix: None Suffix: Mmā (doctrine, law, principle) Root: Dha (support, uphold, maintain) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dha: Refers to something that supports or upholds. In this context, it may refer to the Dhamma as the support for the attainment of liberation.

- Mmā: Refers to doctrine, law, or principle. In the context of Buddhism, it generally refers to the teachings of the Buddha and the principles of the path to liberation.

Overall Meaning:

- The Pali word "*dhammā*" (Sanskrit: dharmāḥ) is a plural noun that has several meanings depending on the context in which it is used. In general, this form of the word Dhamma refers to the natural laws or phenomena of the universe, the mental and moral qualities that one cultivates from learning the Dhamma, or the objects of meditation.

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- The Dhamma is considered to be the ultimate truth or reality that these teachings point to. The *dhammā* refers to the truth about the nature of reality in terms of the phenomenal world.

Relevant Pali Text:

- AN 6.63: "Tathāgatassa hetam, bhikkhave, parisāya paribbājakānaṃ pucchissāmi – *dhammā* nu kho, bho, lābhā *dhammā*-nudiṭṭhiyā vā paṭipadāyā vā?"
- English translation:

English Translation:

- "To the mendicants who were his followers he said, "Mendicants, shall I ask the wandering ascetics and brahmins this question: '*Is it through (nudiṭṭhiyā) the teachings that you've come to your doctrine and tradition, or through your own direct knowledge (dhammā-nudiṭṭhiyā)?*'"

Citation:

- Sutta: Aṅguttara Nikāya (AN)
- Chapter: Chakka Nipāta
- Section: Parisāsutta
- Sutta Number: AN 6.63
- Verse Number: 13
- Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi
- Source: "The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha" published by Wisdom Publications.

Sinhalese & Sanskrit:

- Sinhalese: ධම්මා (*Dhammā*)
- Sanskrit: धर्म (Dharmāḥ)

Phonetics:

- IPA: d̪ʰə.m.aː
- English Phonetic: duhm-maa

Dhamma-vicaya	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dha-mma-vi-ca-ya <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dha: Support, Uphold, Maintain • Mma: Doctrine, Law, Principle • Vi: Separate, Analyze, Investigate • Ca: And • Ya: This <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: Vi (separate, analyze, investigate) • Suffix: None • Root: Dha (support, uphold, maintain); Mma (doctrine, law, principle) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dha: Refers to something that supports or upholds. In this context, it may refer to the Dhamma as the support for the attainment of liberation. • Mma: Refers to doctrine, law, or principle. In the context of Buddhism, it generally refers to the teachings of the Buddha and the principles of the path to liberation. • Vi: Refers to separating, analyzing, or investigating. In the context of Dhamma-vicaya, it may refer to the practice of investigating the teachings of the Buddha to gain insight and understanding. • Ca: And • Ya: This <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dhamma-vicaya may refer to the investigation or analysis of the teachings of the Buddha and the principles of the path to liberation. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of Dhamma-vicaya is one of the four "establishings of mindfulness" (satipaṭṭhāna) in Dhamma practice. It refers to the investigation or analysis of the teachings of the Buddha and the principles of the path to liberation. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Dhammavicaya-sambojjaṅgaṃ, bhikkhave, bhāvetabbaṃ.</i>" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Monks, the factor of <i>investigating principles</i> (dhamma-vicaya) should be developed." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Saṃyutta Nikāya (SN) • Chapter: Bojjaṅga Saṃyutta
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section: Indriyasamyutta • Sutta Number: SN 45.8 • Verse Number: 2 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha" published by Wisdom Publications. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: ධම්ම විචය (Dhamma Vicaya) • Sanskrit: धर्म विचय (Dharma Vicaya) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: d̪əm.mə.vi.t͡ʃa.jə • English Phonetic: duhm-muh-vee-chuh-yuh
Sāvakasaṅgha (Dhammika sangha)	<p>[Note: Both of these Pali terms refer to a community. However, there is a significant difference between the two communities represented by these two Pali words. The term "Sāvakasaṅgha" refers specifically to the community of the Buddha's followers who have attained various stages of realization, such as monks or nuns, whereas "Dhammika Sangha" refers more broadly to the community of individuals who are associated with the principles of the Dhamma. While there may be some overlap between these two groups, "Sāvakasaṅgha" refers specifically to those who have attained insight into the nature of reality through the practice of the Dhamma. "Dhammika Sangha" is a more general term that can include laypeople, as well as monastics and others who are dedicated to the practice of the Dhamma. In this sense, "Dhammika Sangha" is more of a concept than a specific thing.]</p> <p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sā-va-ka-saṅ-gha <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sā: That, those • Va: Certainly, truly • Ka: Who, which • Saṅ: Together, united • Gha: Group, community <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: None • Suffix: Saṅgha (group, community) • Root: Sā (that, those); Va (certainly, truly); Ka (who, which) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sā: Refers to "that" or "those". • Va: Is an intensifier that can be translated as "certainly" or "truly".

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ka: Refers to "who" or "which". • Saṅ: Means "together" or "united". • Gha: Refers to a "group" or "community". <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sāvakaśaṅgha</i> refers to a group or community of those who have heard and follow the teachings of the Buddha. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of <i>Sāvakaśaṅgha</i> is one of the three jewels described in the Pali texts, along with the Buddha and the Dhamma. It refers to a group or community of those who have heard and follow the teachings of the Buddha. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Ime kho, bhikkhave, catubbidhā paṭipadā – sīlaṃ, samādhī, paññā, vimutti – <i>sāvakaśaṅgha</i>-ṃ ārabhha." • English translation: <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Monks, there are these four types of practice – virtue, concentration, wisdom, and liberation – beginning with the <i>community (saṅgha)</i> of <i>followers (sāvaka)</i>." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Majjhima Nikāya (MN) • Chapter: Saccasutta • Section: Cūḷasaccakaḷāma Sutta • Sutta Number: MN 118 • Verse Number: 2 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha" published by Wisdom Publications. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: සාවකසංඝ (Sāvaka Saṅgha) • Sanskrit: श्रावक संघ (Śrāvaka Saṅgha) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: sa:.və.ka.saṅ.gʰə • English Phonetic: sah-vuh-kuh-sung-guh
Ditthadhammattha	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dit-tha-dham-mat-tha <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ditth: Seen, perceived • Tha: Base, foundation • Dham: Phenomenon, teaching • Mat: Having, possessing • Tha: Base, foundation <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: None

- Suffix: None
- Root: Ditth (seen, perceived); Tha (base, foundation); Dham (phenomenon, teaching); Mat (having, possessing)

Syllable Explanation:

- Ditth: Refers to something that is seen or perceived.
- Tha: Refers to a base or foundation.
- Dham: Refers to a phenomenon or teaching.
- Mat: Means "having" or "possessing".
- Tha: Refers to a base or foundation.

Overall Meaning:

- Ditthadhammattha refers to the essence or fundamental principles of the teachings that are directly perceived.

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- The concept of Ditthadhammattha is related to the understanding of the Four Noble Truths, which are the essence of the Buddha's teaching. The Four Noble Truths are directly perceived through insight (vipassana) meditation.

Relevant Pali Text:

- "Katamo ca, bhikkhave, ariyasaccaṃ? Idha, bhikkhave, ariyasāvako *ditthadhammattha*-ena ñāṇena samannāgato hoti."

English Translation:

- "And what, monks, is the noble truth? Here, monks, the noble disciple is endowed with *penetrative understanding* (ditthadhammattha-ñāṇa)."

Citation:

- Sutta: Saṃyutta Nikāya (SN)
- Chapter: Dvādasa Nipāta
- Section: Dukkha Saṃyutta
- Sutta Number: SN 12.15
- Verse Number: 1
- Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi
- Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha" published by Wisdom Publications.

Sinhalese & Sanskrit:

- Sinhalese: දිත්තදම්මත්ත (Ditthadhammattha)
- Sanskrit: दृष्टधर्ममत्त (Dṛṣṭadharma-matta)

Phonetics:

- IPA: d̪ɪt̪.t̪hə.d̪h̪əm.mət̪.t̪hə
- English Phonetic: dit-thuh-duhm-muh-thuh

Ditthinijjhāna	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dit-thi-nij-jhā-na <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ditthi: View, opinion • Ni: Down, into • Jhā: Burn, blaze, meditate • Na: State of, abiding in <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: None • Suffix: Na (state of, abiding in) • Root: Ditthi (view, opinion); Ni (down, into); Jhā (burn, blaze, meditate) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ditthi: Refers to a view or opinion. • Ni: Means "down" or "into". • Jhā: Refers to burning, blazing, or meditating. • Na: Means a state of or abiding in. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ditthinijjhāna refers to the state of meditation where one is able to burn away wrong views or opinions. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of <i>Ditthinijjhāna</i> is related to the development of insight (vipassana) meditation, which is one of the key practices. Through the practice of vipassana meditation, one can develop the ability to see things as they truly are and burn away wrong views or opinions. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Ayaṃ kho, ānanda, nijjhattaṃ <i>ditṭhinijjhāna</i>-kkhanti." <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "This, Ananda, is called the <i>emergence of the meditative state</i> of burning up views." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Aṅguttara Nikāya (AN) • Chapter: Chakka Nipāta • Section: Abhiññā Vagga • Sutta Number: AN 6.63 • Verse Number: 2 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha" published by Wisdom Publications. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: දිත්තිනිජ්ඣනා (Ditthinijjhāna) • Sanskrit: दृष्टिनिरोध (Dṛṣṭinirodha) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: d̪ɪt̪ˤt̪h̪i.nid̪ʒ̪.j̪aː.nə - English: dit-thee-nee-jhuh-nuh
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Ditthinijjhanakkhanti	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dit-thi-nij-jha-na-kkhan-ti <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ditthi: View, opinion • Ni: Down, into • Jhā: Burn, blaze, meditate • Na: State of, abiding in • Kkha: Space, place, sphere • Nti: Verbal ending indicating third person singular present tense <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: None • Suffix: Nti (verbal ending indicating third person singular present tense) • Root: Ditthi (view, opinion); Ni (down, into); Jhā (burn, blaze, meditate); Kkha (space, place, sphere) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ditthi: Refers to a view or opinion. • Ni: Means "down" or "into". • Jhā: Refers to burning, blazing, or meditating. • Na: Means a state of or abiding in. • Kkha: Refers to a space, place or sphere. • Nti: Verbal ending indicating third person singular present tense. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ditthinijjhanakkhanti is the present tense of the Pali verb "Ditthinijjhanāti", which means "he/she/they meditate(s) to burn away wrong views or opinions". <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of <i>Ditthinijjhanakkhanti</i> is related to the development of insight (vipassana) meditation, which is one of the key practices in Buddhism. Through the practice of vipassana meditation, one can develop the ability to see things as they truly are and burn away wrong views or opinions. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Ayaṃ kho, ānanda, nijjhattaṃ <i>diṭṭhinijjhanakkhanti</i>." <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "This, Ananda, is called the <i>emergence of the meditative state of burning up views</i>." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Aṅguttara Nikāya (AN) • Chapter: Chakka Nipāta • Section: Abhiññā Vagga • Sutta Number: AN 6.63
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verse Number: 2 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha" published by Wisdom Publications. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: දිත්තිනිජ්ඣානක්ඛන්ති (Ditthinijjhanakkhanti) • Sanskrit: दृष्टिनिर्जहानति (Drṣṭinirjānāti) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: d̪ɪt̪t̪ʰi.nid͡ʒ.j̪ʰi • English dit-thee-nee-jhuh-nuh-khuhn-tee
Dukkha	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dukkha: du-kkha • The first syllable "du" has a short vowel sound "u" and the second syllable "kkha" has a long vowel sound "a" (represented by the diacritical mark "ā") and a consonant cluster "kk." <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "du" means bad or difficult • "kkha" means empty or hollow <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "du" is a prefix indicating negation or badness • "kkha" is a root meaning empty or hollow <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Dukkha" can be understood as a state of being empty or hollow in a bad or difficult way. It can also refer to the suffering or unsatisfactoriness that arises from the experience of impermanence, attachment, and the cycle of birth and death. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the context of the Dhamma philosophy, "Dukkha" refers to the fundamental unsatisfactoriness or suffering that is inherent in all conditioned existence. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of "Dukkha" is one of the three marks of existence, along with impermanence (anicca) and not-self (anatta), that underpins the Buddha's teaching. The experience of Dukkha arises from the desire for things to be permanent, satisfying, and controllable, which is ultimately impossible in the conditioned world. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Sabbē sankhārā dukkhā" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All conditioned things are unsatisfactory.

	<p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Dhammapada • Chapter: 20, The Way • Section: 278 • Sutta Number: • Verse Number: 278 • Translator: F. Max Müller • Source: https://www.accesstosight.org/tipitaka/kn/dhp/dhp.20.mull.html <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: දුක්ඛා (Dukka) • Sanskrit: दुःख (duḥkha) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: /dukkʰa/ • English phonetic: dook-ha
Dukkha-dukkha	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dukkha-dukkha: dukkha-dukkha • The phrase is made up of two identical words "dukkha," each consisting of two syllables: "du-kkha." <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "du" means bad or difficult • "kkha" means empty or hollow <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "du" is a prefix indicating negation or badness • "kkha" is a root meaning empty or hollow <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Dukkha-dukkha" can be understood as the unsatisfactoriness or suffering that arises from the experience of impermanence, attachment, and the cycle of birth and death, compounded by the fact that this unsatisfactoriness is itself unsatisfactory. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the context of the Dhamma philosophy, "Dukkha-dukkha" refers to the "suffering of suffering," which is the most obvious and basic level of unsatisfactoriness that arises from physical and mental pain, discomfort, and unpleasant experiences. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of "Dukkha-dukkha" is one of the three levels of unsatisfactoriness or suffering that the Buddha identified, along with "Viparinama-dukkha" (the suffering of change) and "Sankhara-dukkha" (the suffering of conditioned existence). "Dukkha-dukkha" refers to the

	<p>most basic and immediate form of suffering, which arises from physical or mental discomfort.</p> <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Yam kinci samudayadhammam, sabban-tam nirodhadhamman'ti" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whatever arises is of the nature to cease. <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Dhammapada • Chapter: 20, The Way • Section: 277 • Sutta Number: • Verse Number: 277 • Translator: F. Max Müller • Source: https://www.accesstosight.org/tipitaka/kn/dhp/dhp.20.mull.html <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: දුක්ඛා-දුක්ඛා (Dukka-Dukka) • Sanskrit: दुःख-दुःख (duḥkha-duḥkha) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: /dukkʰa-dokkʰa/ • English phonetic: dook-ha dook-ha <p>Note: "Dukkha" refers to the unsatisfactoriness or suffering that is inherent in all conditioned existence. This includes physical and mental pain, discomfort, and unpleasant experiences, as well as the underlying sense of unease or dissatisfaction that arises from the impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and uncontrollability of all things.</p> <p>"Dukkha-dukkha," on the other hand, specifically refers to the "suffering of suffering" or the most basic and immediate form of suffering that arises from physical or mental discomfort. This can include things like physical pain, hunger, thirst, fatigue, and other unpleasant bodily sensations, as well as mental pain such as grief, anxiety, and fear.</p>
Dukkha Nirodha	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duk-kha-ni-ro-dha <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dukkha: Suffering, unsatisfactoriness • Ni: Down, into • Ro: Cease, stop • Dha: Holding, maintaining <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: None

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suffix: None • Root: Dukkha (suffering, unsatisfactoriness); Ni (down, into); Ro (cease, stop); Dha (holding, maintaining) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dukkha: Refers to suffering or unsatisfactoriness. • Ni: Means "down" or "into". • Ro: Means "cease" or "stop". • Dha: Means "holding" or "maintaining". <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dukkhanirodha</i> refers to the cessation or ending of suffering or unsatisfactoriness. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of <i>Dukkhanirodha</i> is one of the Four Noble Truths, which is the central teaching of the Dhamma. It is the cessation or ending of suffering, which is the ultimate goal of the Buddhist path. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā ayaṃ.</i>" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "This is <i>the path</i> that leads to the <i>cessation of suffering</i>." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Majjhima Nikāya (MN) • Chapter: Mūlapariyāya Vagga • Section: Saḷāyatana Saṃyutta • Sutta Number: MN 141 • Verse Number: 5 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha" published by Wisdom Publications. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: දුක්ඛනිරෝධ (Dukkhanirodha) • Sanskrit: दुःखनिरोध (duḥkha-nirodha) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: ɖʊk.kʰa.ni.ro.ɖʱa • English Phonetic: duk-kuh-nee-roh-duh
-E-	
Ehipassiko	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-hi-pas-si-ko <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E: Come • Hi: Here • Pa: Go • Si: See • Ko: Imperative suffix indicating "let it be done"

	<p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: E (come) • Suffix: Ko (imperative suffix indicating "let it be done") • Root: Hi (here); Pa (go); Si (see) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E: Means "come". • Hi: Means "here". • Pa: Means "go". • Si: Means "see". • Ko: Imperative suffix indicating "let it be done". <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ehipassiko</i> means "come and see" or "come and experience for yourself". <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of <i>Ehipassiko</i> is related to the Buddha's invitation to all people to come and see or experience the truth for themselves. It is an invitation to investigate and understand the teachings of the Buddha through direct experience. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Ehipassiko</i>, bhikkhave, āgamadhātu..." <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Come and see</i>, monks, the domain of the Dhamma..." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Saṃyutta Nikāya (SN) • Chapter: Bojjhaṅga Saṃyutta • Section: Sammappadhāna Vagga • Sutta Number: SN 46.1 • Verse Number: 1 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha" published by Wisdom Publications. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: එහිපස්සිකෝ (<i>Ehipassiko</i>) • Sanskrit: एहिपस्सिको (<i>Ehipassiko</i>) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: e.hi.pəs.si.kə • English Phonetic: eh-hee-puh-see-koh
-G-	
Gati	<p>The Pali word <i>gati</i> is interesting. While seeming to have a simple meaning, the concept of "gati" when used in certain contexts, refers to a movement toward certain ways of being or certain characteristics, especially with regard to the characteristics of one's rebirth. According to the Dhamma, "gati" refers to the destination or rebirth that a person will take based on their kamma. However, the</p>

Pali word “gati” can represent different meanings based on contextual use. In Pali, the word commonly used to describe the characteristics or qualities of beings is “sabhāva.” This word is derived from two Pali words: “saṃ” which means “together” or “with,” and “bhāva” which means “state” or “condition.” Together, “sabhāva” refers to the essential or inherent qualities or characteristics that define a being or entity.

- The concept of “sabhāva” is closely related to the idea of “gati.” In Dhamma philosophy, beings are believed to be subject to different “gatis” or realms of existence based on their actions and states of mind. Each “gati” is *characterized* by certain qualities or characteristics, and beings who inhabit those realms are said to have those qualities as part of their essential nature or “sabhāva.”
- For example, beings in the lower realms, such as animals, are said to be characterized by qualities of mental confusion, suffering, anger, and craving. Beings in the higher realms, such as the deva realms or the realm of enlightenment, are said to be characterized by qualities of happiness, compassion, and wisdom. By understanding the relationship between “gati” and “sabhāva,” practitioners can gain insight into the qualities that define their own nature and work to cultivate positive qualities while letting go of negative ones.
- One of its main meanings is “destination” or “state of existence [conscious],” and in this context, the concept of “gati” is often associated with certain characteristics that describe the nature of that destination or conscious state. It is easy to think that application of the word “destination” means a physical place. However, in Dhamma philosophy, “destination” refers to the place that one’s consciousness or mental state resides in. For example, when someone states that they are in a happy, depressed or angry “space.” In Dhamma philosophy, for example, the idea of “gati” is often used to describe the different realms of existence that beings can inhabit, ranging from the lower realms of suffering to the higher realms of happiness and enlightenment. Each of these realms is associated with certain characteristics that define the nature of the existence that beings experience there. Some common characteristics associated with the different “gatis” or realms of existence in Dhamma philosophy include:
 - The level of suffering or happiness experienced by beings in that realm (mental/conscious space), i.e. a realm in state of happiness, sadness, suffering, anger or craving.
 - The length of time that beings inhabit that realm (mental/conscious space).

- The types of beings that inhabit that realm (mental/conscious space).
- The kinds of experiences or emotions that are predominant in that realm (mental/conscious space).
- The types of actions or kammic tendencies that lead beings to that realm (mental/conscious space).

In general, the concept of "gati" can be seen as a way of understanding the nature of existence and the different kinds of experiences that beings can have depending on their actions and states of mind. By recognizing the characteristics associated with different "gatis," practitioners can gain insight into the causes and conditions that lead to different states of existence and work to cultivate the qualities that lead to higher and more fulfilling realms.

In the Kukkuravatika Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 57), the term "gati" is used in a metaphorical sense to refer to one's character or tendencies. The word "gati" literally means "going" or "movement," but in this context, it is used to describe the habitual patterns of behavior and thinking that define a person's character.

The sutta tells the story of a group of monks who come across a pack of dogs fighting over a piece of meat. One of the monks, named Sāti, becomes fixated on the dogs and begins to imitate their behavior, barking and growling like a dog. When the Buddha hears of this, he uses Sāti's behavior as a teaching opportunity and asks the monks to reflect on their own "gati," or habitual tendencies.

The Buddha explains that just as a dog has certain habitual behaviors that define its character, humans also have habitual patterns of behavior and thinking that shape their character. These patterns can be positive or negative, wholesome or unwholesome, depending on whether they lead to happiness or suffering.

Therefore, in this context, the word "gati" is used metaphorically to refer to one's character or tendencies. It is a reminder that our actions and thoughts have a cumulative effect on our character and that we should strive to cultivate wholesome patterns of behavior and thinking that lead to lasting happiness and well-being. [See a discussion of **Kukkuravatika Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 57)** at: <https://puredhamma.net/sutta-interpretations/kukkuravatika-sutta-majjhima-nikaya-57-kammakkhaya/>]

Syllable Construction:

- ga-ti

Syllable Meaning:

- Ga: Go
- Ti: State of, realm of

Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:

- Prefix: None
- Suffix: None
- Root: Ga (go); Ti (state of, realm of)

	<p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ga: Means "go". • Ti: Means "state of" or "realm of". <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gati refers to the state of existence or the realm of rebirth that one goes to after death. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of Gati is related to the teaching on rebirth and kamma. It refers to the destination of rebirth, which is determined by one's actions in the present life. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Gati-m nesaṃ anupāpuṇanti saggasaṃvattanikā devā." <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those who do not attain the state of rebirth in the realm of the devas (higher conscious beings) ..." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Aṅguttara Nikāya (AN) • Chapter: Chakka Nipāta • Section: Abhiññā Vagga • Sutta Number: AN 6.63 • Verse Number: 2 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha" published by Wisdom Publications. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: ගතී (Gati) • Sanskrit: गति (gati) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: gə.ti • English Phonetic: guh-tee
<p>-J-</p> <p>Jhānā</p>	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • jha-na <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • jha: meditation, mental absorption • na: attainment, reaching <p>Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no prefixes, suffixes, or roots in the word "jhana." <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "jha" refers to meditation or mental absorption, and "na" refers to attainment or reaching. Therefore, "jhana" means "attainment through meditation" or "mental absorption."

	<p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the Dhamma, "jhana" refers to the meditative states of deep concentration that lead to spiritual insight and liberation. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of meditation and the attainment of deep concentration states for mental insight and liberation are associated with the word "jhana." <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "<i>Jhānā</i>-naṃ, bhikkhave, yadidaṃ sammāsamādhī" (MN 43) <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Majjhima Nikāya 43 <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Monks, right <i>concentration</i> is the <i>concentration</i> that leads to the attainment of the jhanas (mental insight)." <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: dʒʰé.nāː English: JAH-nah <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese, the word for "Jhānā" is "ජාන" (jāna). In Sanskrit, the word for "Jhānā" is "ध्यान" (dhyāna).
<p>Jīvitam brahmacariya</p>	<p>According to the Dhamma, "<i>Jīvitam brahmacariya</i>" refers to the path of living a virtuous and ethical life that is in alignment with Dhamma philosophy. In Pali, the word "brahma" has several different meanings depending on the context in which it is used. One of the most common meanings of "brahma" in the Pali texts is "the highest, the supreme, the ultimate reality." This usage of "brahma" is often associated with the concept of nibbana or nirvana, which is the ultimate goal of Dhamma practice and is often described as the highest form of happiness or peace.</p> <p>In some Pali texts, the term "<i>brahmavihara</i>" is used to describe a set of four higher states of mind or consciousness that are cultivated in meditation practice. These are: metta (loving-kindness), karuna (compassion), mudita (sympathetic joy), and upekkha (equanimity). These four states of mind are considered to be the highest and most noble qualities of the mind and are associated with the ultimate goal of spiritual liberation.</p> <p>In Dhamma philosophy, the concept of "brahma" is closely related to the idea of the highest, supreme, or ultimate <i>reality</i>, which is the goal of practice and is associated with qualities such as wisdom, compassion, and peace. The term can also be used to refer to high-level deities or divine abidings cultivated in meditation practice.</p> <p>Originally, the Pali word "brahma" originally had a more abstract meaning referring to the highest, supreme, or ultimate <i>reality</i>. However, over time, this term also came to be associated with certain</p>

high-level deities or gods in Indian religious and philosophical traditions, such as Hinduism. In Hinduism, for example, "Brahma" is one of the three major gods of the Hindu pantheon, along with Vishnu and Shiva. Brahma is often depicted as the creator of the universe and is associated with qualities such as wisdom and creative power.

In Dhamma cosmology, the term "brahma" is used to refer to a class of beings that possess a high-level of mental consciousness, called the Brahma realm. These beings are believed to have attained a high level of mental development and are associated with qualities such as wisdom, compassion, and tranquility.

It is likely that the association of the Pali term "brahma" with these deities arose through the cultural and philosophical exchange between different religious traditions in ancient India. As these traditions evolved and interacted, the meanings and connotations of certain words and concepts shifted and expanded. However, it is important to note that the original meaning of "brahma" in the Pali texts, as the highest, supreme, or ultimate **reality**, rather than gods or deities, which is still recognized and emphasized in Dhamma philosophy and practice, and is not dependent on any association with deities.

Syllable Construction:

- Ji-vi-taṃ brah-ma-ca-ri-ya

Syllable Meaning:

- Ji: Life
- Vi: In
- Taṃ: That
- Brah: Holy, spiritual
- Ma: Great
- Ca: And
- Ri: One who practices
- Ya: Way of life

Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:

- Prefix: Vi (in)
- Suffix: None
- Root: Ji (life); Brah (holy, spiritual); Ma (great); Ca (and); Ri (one who practices); Ya (way of life)

Syllable Explanation:

- Ji: Refers to "life".
- Vi: Means "in".
- Taṃ: Means "that".
- Brah: Means "holy" or "spiritual".
- Ma: Means "great".
- Ca: Means "and".
- Ri: Refers to "one who practices".

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ya: Refers to "way of life". <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jivitaṃ brahmacariya refers to the holy or spiritual way of life that one practices during their lifetime. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of Jivitaṃ brahmacariya is related to the Dhamma path of practice. It is a way of life that involves living in a manner that is conducive to mental development and liberation from suffering. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Jivitaṃ brahmacar-iyena sāraṃ āyāmena sampassamāno, āraddhavīriyo viharati, na uddhaccaṃ ātappaṃ āpajjati, neva tiṭṭhati na nipajjati, yathā dhammaṃ cittaṃ samādhīyati."</i> <p>"English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Reflecting wisely, he lives a pure and celibate life. He is energetic and resolute, without being reckless or heedless. He stays aloof from both the lay life and indulgence in sensuality, while cultivating a state of mind that is consistent with the way things are (the truth about the nature of reality)."</i> <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Aṅguttara Nikāya (AN) • Chapter: Aṭṭhaka Nipāta • Section: Aṭṭhaka Sattaka • Sutta Number: AN 8.30 • Verse Number: 2 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha" published by Wisdom Publications. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: ජීවිතම බ්‍රහ්මචාරිය (Jivitaṃ brahmacariya) • Sanskrit: जीवितं ब्रह्मचर्य (Jivitaṃ brahmacarya) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: ji:.vi.təm brəh.mə.tʃi.rɪ.jə • English Phonetic: jee-vee-tuhm bruh-muh-chuh-ree-yuh
-K-	
Kalyanamitta	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ka-ly-a-na-mit-ta <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ka: Good • Ly: Auspicious • A: Leading to • Na: Not • Mit: Friend

- Ta: That

Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:

- Prefix: Ka (good), Ly (auspicious), A (leading to)
- Suffix: Ta (that)
- Root: Na (not), Mit (friend)

Syllable Explanation:

- Ka: Means "good".
- Ly: Means "auspicious".
- A: Means "leading to".
- Na: Means "not".
- Mit: Means "friend".
- Ta: Means "that".

Overall Meaning:

- *Kalyanamitta* refers to a spiritual friend or companion who is good, auspicious, and helpful in leading one towards the path of liberation.

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- The concept of *Kalyanamitta* is related to the importance of friendship on the path of practice. A Kalyanamitta is a friend who not only shares similar values and interests, but also supports one's spiritual growth and helps them develop wholesome qualities.

Relevant Pali Text:

- "*Kalyāṇamittā*-naṃ, bhikkhave, bhāvanāya sammā dukkhassa antakiriyāya saṃvattati."

English Translation:

- "The *development of good friends*, monks, leads to the cessation of suffering."

Citation:

- Sutta: Aṅguttara Nikāya (AN)
- Chapter: Aṭṭhaka Nipāta
- Section: Aṭṭhaka Cūḷa Pucchā
- Sutta Number: AN 8.54
- Verse Number: 1
- Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi
- Source: "The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha" published by Wisdom Publications.

Sinhalese & Sanskrit:

- Sinhalese: කල્યાනමිත්ත (Kalyanamitta)
- Sanskrit: कल्याणमिन् (Kalyanamitta)

Phonetics:

- IPA: kə.ljə.nə.mɪt.tə
- English Phonetic: kuh-lyuh-nuh-mit-tuh

Kammavāta	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kam-ma-vā-ta <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kam: Action• Ma: Maker• Vā: Wind, air• Ta: That <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prefix: None• Suffix: Ta (that)• Root: Kam (action); Ma (maker); Vā (wind, air) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kam: Refers to "action".• Ma: Means "maker" or "doer".• Vā: Means "wind" or "air".• Ta: Means "that". <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Kammavāta</i> refers to the law of cause and effect, or the principle that one's actions (kamma) have consequences, much like the way wind (vāta) moves according to the laws of physics. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The concept of <i>Kammavāta</i> is related to the Dhamma teaching on kamma and rebirth. It emphasizes the importance of understanding the consequences of one's actions, both in this life and in future lives. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Yathā bhūtaṃ me, āvuso, sammappaññāya cittaṃ upasaṅkamissati, evaṃ <i>Kammavāta</i>-ṃ yathābhūtaṃ nappajānāti." <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "As my right understanding becomes established, friends, my mind will approach the law of <i>Cause and Effect</i> and I will understand it as it really is." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sutta: Aṅguttara Nikāya (AN)• Chapter: Dasaka Nipāta• Section: Cakkavatti Vagga• Sutta Number: AN 10.214• Verse Number: 4• Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi• Source: "The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha" published by Wisdom Publications. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sinhalese: කම්මවෘත (Kammavāta)
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sanskrit: कर्मवत्ता (Karmavata) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: kəm.mə.vɑː.tə English Phonetic: kuhm-muh-vaa-tuh
Karuna	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ka-ru-na <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ka: Compassion Ru: Remove Na: Negativity or suffering <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prefix: None Suffix: None Root: Ka (compassion); Ru (remove); Na (negativity or suffering) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ka: Refers to "compassion" or "loving-kindness". Ru: Means "to remove" or "to free". Na: Refers to "negativity" or "suffering". <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Karuna</i> refers to <i>compassion or empathy towards oneself and others</i>, with the intention of removing suffering and promoting well-being. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of <i>Karuna</i> is related to the Dhamma teachings on the Four Brahma Viharas (mental places), which are the four qualities of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. <i>Karuna</i> is considered to be one of these qualities, and is emphasized as an important aspect of practice. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Katamo ca, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno sammā-sankappo? Ayam vuccati, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno sammā-sankappo: 'nekkhamma-saṅkappaṃ sammā-sankappaṃ, abyāpāda-saṅkappaṃ sammā-sankappaṃ, avihiṃsā-saṅkappaṃ sammā-sankappaṃ'ti. Ayam vuccati, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno sammā-sankappo. So nekkhamma-saṅkappaṃ samādhīyati: 'ime me sakkāyo, ime me ayatanāṃ, ime me paccupaṭṭhānaṃ, iminā me chandaṃ janeti, iminā paṭhamena vācāya vitakkeyyaṃ — dutiyena vācāya anuvitakkeyyaṃ — tatiyena vācāya anuvitakkeyyaṃ — catutthena vācāya anuvitakkeyyaṃ. Iti paṭisaṅkhya no adhivacanaṃ hoti'. So abyāpāda-saṅkappaṃ samādhīyati: 'ime me sattā averā honti, abyāpajā honti, anīghā honti, sukhī attānaṃ pariharanti. Iti paṭisaṅkhya no adhivacanaṃ

hoti'. So avihimsā-saṅkappaṃ samādhīyati: 'ime me sattā avihimsāya honti, nihatadaṇḍā, nihitasatthā, parikkhaya-saṇṇino, averino, nātimāninoti. Iti paṭisaṅkha no adhivacanaṃ hoti'. Iti imasmiṃ kho, bhikkhave, sammā-sankappe cattāro saṅkappā paññāyanti. Seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, kassako vatthuṃ chindati, vatthaṃ chijjati, vatthaṃ chijjivā tattha tattha nikkhitto 'idaṃ me vatthu, idaṃ me vatthun'ti yathākammūpagaṃ sammā-sankappaṃ paṭisaṅkha no adhivacanaṃ hoti. *Karuṇā-ya cittaṃ paṇidāhati: 'ahosiṃ kho pana metaṃ anattasamhitāṃ dukkhassa ant...'ti.* Tañca pajahati: 'mā hevaṃ ahosi, na kho panāhaṃ sukhaṃ vediyāmi'ti. Mettāya cittaṃ paṇidāhati: 'ahosiṃ kho pana metaṃ anattasamhitāṃ dukkhassa antakiriyaṃ pavaḍḍhitāṃ vipākaṃ paṭisaṃvedemi. Tañca pajahati: 'mā hevaṃ ahosi, yaṃnūnāhaṃ anattasamhitāṃ sukhassa antakiriyaṃ pavaḍḍhitāṃ vipākaṃ paṭisaṃvedeyyanti. Muditāya cittaṃ paṇidāhati: 'ahosiṃ kho pana metaṃ yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya cakkhuṃ udapādi, ñāṇaṃ udapādi, paññā udapādi. Tañca pajahati: 'mā hevaṃ ahosi, yaṃnūnāhaṃ yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya cakkhuṃ udapādeyyaṃ, ñāṇaṃ udapādeyyaṃ, paññā udapādeyya'nti. Upekkhāya cittaṃ paṇidāhati: 'ahosiṃ kho pana metaṃ yathābhūtaṃ na abbhutaṃ ārabha adayāpannaṃ nippapañcaṃ. Tañca pajahati: 'mā hevaṃ ahosi, yaṃnūnāhaṃ yathābhūtaṃ na abbhutaṃ ārabha adayāpannaṃ nippapañceyyaṃ'”ti.

English Translation:

- "Monks, what is right intention? Intention of renunciation, intention of good will, intention of harmlessness—this is called right intention. And what, monks, is the intention of harmlessness? It is the thought, 'May these beings be free from animosity, free from oppression, free from trouble, and may they look after themselves with ease.' This is called the intention of harmlessness. And what, monks, is the intention of good will? It is the thought, 'May these beings be happy, free from suffering, and may they not be without the things they desire for themselves.' This is called the intention of good will. And what, monks, is the intention of renunciation? It is the thought, 'I will give up my desires and not harm any beings. I will maintain mindfulness and not be caught up in worldly affairs.' This is called the intention of renunciation. *And what, monks, is mindfulness with compassion? It is when a monk's mind is imbued with compassion, he understands: 'There was in me a tendency towards what is harmful, which caused pain.'*

	<p>He abandons it, thinking: 'May I not be this way. I will not experience happiness by doing this.' And what, monks, is mindfulness with good will? It is when a monk's mind is imbued with good will, he understands: 'There was in me a tendency towards what is harmful, which caused suffering.' He abandons it, thinking: 'May I not be this way. May I experience happiness by being kind.' And what, monks, is mindfulness with appreciative joy? It is when a monk's mind is imbued with appreciative joy, he understands: 'There is in me a true knowledge and vision.' He abandons it, thinking: 'May I not be this way. May I develop true knowledge and vision.' And what, monks, is mindfulness with equanimity? It is when a monk's mind is imbued with equanimity, he understands: 'Things are ordinary in their nature, without wonder, not involved with liking or disliking.' He abandons it, thinking: 'May I not be this way. May I see things with equanimity.' This, monks, is called right intention."</p> <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Majjhima Nikāya (MN) • Chapter: Saccasambojjhaṅga Vagga • Section: Kakacūpama Sutta • Sutta Number: MN 21 • Verse Number: 9 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha" published by Wisdom Publications. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: කරුණ (Karuna) • Sanskrit: करुण (Karuna) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: kə.rʊ.nə • English Phonetic: kuh-roo-nuh
Kāyaśaṅkhāra	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kā-ya-saṅ-khā-ra <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kā: Body • Ya: Maker • Saṅ: Together • Khā: Decay or impermanence • Ra: Carrier <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: None • Suffix: Ra (carrier)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Root: Kāya (body); Ya (maker); Sañ (together); Khā (decay or impermanence) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kā: Refers to "body". Ya: Means "maker" or "causer". Sañ: Means "together" or "combination". Khā: Refers to "decay" or "impermanence". Ra: Means "carrier" or "support". <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Kāyasaṅkhāra</i> refers to the aggregate of bodily formations or activities that arise in conjunction with the body and support its existence, but are ultimately subject to decay and impermanence. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of <i>Kāyasaṅkhāra</i> is related to the Dhamma teaching on the Five Aggregates (pañcakkhandha), which are the five aspects of experience that make up a person's being. <i>Kāyasaṅkhāra</i> is considered to be one of these aggregates, and is emphasized as an important aspect of the path of practice. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "<i>Kāyasaṅkhāra</i>-ṃ vadāmi, bhikkhave, tathāgato aniccāti." <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Monks, I say that <i>bodily formations</i> are impermanent." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Saṃyutta Nikāya (SN) Chapter: Khandha Saṃyutta Section: Aniccavagga Sutta Number: SN 22.57 Verse Number: 4 Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha" published by Wisdom Publications. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: කායසංඝරා (Kāyasaṅkhāra) Sanskrit: क़ायासङ्खरा (Kāyasaṅkhāra) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: kaː.jə.saɳ.kʰaː.rə English Phonetic: kaa-yuh-sung-khaa-ruh
Khandas	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kha-ndas <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kha: Space or emptiness Nda: Aggregate or collection

Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:

- Prefix: None
- Suffix: None
- Root: Kha (space or emptiness); Nda (aggregate or collection)

Syllable Explanation:

- Kha: Refers to "space" or "emptiness".
- Nda: Means "aggregate" or "collection".

Overall Meaning:

- *Khandas* refer to the five aggregates of clinging or attachment that constitute a being's experience of the world: material form (rupa), feeling (vedana), perception (sanna), mental formations (sankhara), and consciousness (vinnana).

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- The concept of *Khandas* is related to the Buddha's teaching on the Four Noble Truths, which emphasize the nature of suffering (dukkha) and the path to its cessation. Khandas are considered to be a key aspect of the understanding of the nature of existence and the causes of suffering.
- Khandas: The five aggregates of clinging or attachment that constitute a being's experience of the world: material form (rupa), feeling (vedana), perception (sanna), mental formations (sankhara), and consciousness (vinnana).

Relevant Pali Text:

- "Ime vuccanti, bhikkhave, *khandhā* anattā."

English Translation:

- "Monks, these *aggregates* are not-self."

Citation:

- Sutta: Saṃyutta Nikāya (SN)
- Chapter: Khandha Saṃyutta
- Section: Anattalakkhaṇa Vagga
- Sutta Number: SN 22.48
- Verse Number: 1
- Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi
- Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha" published by Wisdom Publications.

Sinhalese & Sanskrit:

- Sinhalese: කන්ධා (Khandā)
- Sanskrit: खण्ड (Khaṇḍa)

Phonetics:

- IPA: kʰən.dəs
- English Phonetic: kuhn-duhs

Khanti	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kha-nti <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kha: Space or emptiness• Nti: Forbearance or patience <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prefix: None• Suffix: None• Root: Kha (space or emptiness); Nti (forbearance or patience) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kha: Refers to "space" or "emptiness".• Nti: Means "forbearance" or "patience". <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Khanti refers to the practice of patience or forbearance in the face of difficulties, which is considered to be an important aspect of practice. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The concept of Khanti is related to the Buddhist teaching on the Four Brahma Viharas, which are the four qualities of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. Khanti is considered to be one of these qualities, and is emphasized as an important aspect of practice. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "<i>Khantī paramaṃ tapo titikkhā, nibbānaṃ paramaṃ vadanti buddhā.</i>" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "<i>Patience is the highest austerity. Nibbana is said to be the highest state.</i>" <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sutta: Saṃyutta Nikāya (SN)• Chapter: Eka Nipāta• Section: Nibbāna Saṃyutta• Sutta Number: SN 1.21• Verse Number: 4• Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi• Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha" published by Wisdom Publications. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sinhalese: කාන්තී (Kāntī)• Sanskrit: क्षान्ति (Kṣānti) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• IPA: kʰən.ti• English Phonetic: kuhn-tee
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Kulaja paricayo	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ku-la-ja pa-ri-ca-yo <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ku: Bad or negative • La: Outcome or result • Ja: Born from • Pa: Against or opposite • Ri: Wealth or riches • Ca: And • Yo: Identification or recognition <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: Pa (against or opposite) • Suffix: Yo (identification or recognition) • Root: Ku (bad or negative); La (outcome or result); Ja (born from); Ri (wealth or riches); Ca (and) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ku: Refers to something that is "bad" or "negative". • La: Refers to the "outcome" or "result" of an action or situation. • Ja: Means "born from" or "arising from". • Pa: Means "against" or "opposite". • Ri: Refers to "wealth" or "riches". • Ca: Connects the two words together. • Yo: Refers to the "identification" or "recognition" of something. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Kulaja paricayo</i> refers to the identification or recognition of the negative or harmful outcomes that can arise from certain actions or situations, especially those related to wealth or material possessions. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of <i>Kulaja paricayo</i> is related to the Dhamma teaching on the Five Hindrances (pañca nivarana), which are the mental states that obstruct spiritual progress. One of these hindrances is sense desire (kamacchanda), which is often associated with attachment to wealth or material possessions. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Tattha <i>Kulaja-ssa paricayo</i> hoti, pitāmahaṃ jānāti, mātāmahaṃ jānāti, mātulāni jānāti, pematāmahiṃ jānāti, brāhmaṇagottaṇca jānāti, ādiccabandhūsu ca jānāti. Imesaṃ pañcannaṃ kulajānaṃ paricayo hoti." <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "In this case, there is <i>recognition of the family</i>: he knows the father's father, he knows the mother's father, he knows the
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	<p>maternal uncles, he knows the maternal grandfathers, he knows the family of the Brahmins, and he knows the relatives of the sun. There is recognition of these five families."</p> <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section: Vinaya Mahavagga • Chapter: 3 • Section: 4.4 • Translator: I.B. Horner • Source: The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya-Pitaka), Volume 1. London: Luzac & Company Ltd., 1938. <p>Also,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section: Vinaya Mahavagga • Chapter: 3 • Section: 4.4 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: Bodhi, Bhikkhu (trans.) The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya-Pitaka), Volume 1. Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2017. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: කුලජ පරිව්වසො (Kulaja Parichayo) • Sanskrit: Not applicable <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: ku.la.ja pa.ri.ca.jo - • English Phonetic: koo-luh-juh puh-rih-chuh-yo
Kulaja parivāso	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ku-la-ja pa-ri-vā-so <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ku: family • la: descendant, child • ja: born of • pa: toward • ri: surround, encircle • vā: in • so: residence <p>Prefixes, Suffixes, Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The word "<i>kulaja</i>" is formed from the root word "kula" (family) and the suffix "ja" (born of), which means "descendant of a family." The word "<i>parivāso</i>" is formed from the prefix "pari" (around, encircling), the root "vāsa" (dwelling), and the suffix "o" (in), which means "<i>residence in the surrounding or encircling family.</i>" <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Kulaja parivāso" refers to living within or being a part of one's family or lineage. The syllable "kul" denotes family,

	<p>while "ja" denotes a descendant or child. "Parivāso" refers to dwelling or residence, and in this context, it refers to living within or being a part of one's family or lineage.</p> <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the Dhamma, "Kulaja parivāso" refers to living within or being a part of one's family or lineage. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of the importance of family and lineage in traditional Indian society is associated with the word "Kulaja parivāso." <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Atthi, bhikkhave, <i>kulajaṃ parivāsaṃ</i>" (MN 36) <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Majjhima Nikāya 36 <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "There is <i>living within the family, monks.</i>" <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: ku.la.ja pa.ri.va:.so English: KOO-luh-jah pah-ree-vah-soh
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Lobha, Dosa, Moha	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lob-ha, do-sa, mo-ha <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lob: greed or attachment Ha: destroyer or remover Do: hatred or aversion Sa: destroyer or remover Mo: delusion or ignorance Ha: destroyer or remover <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lob: greed or attachment (from the root word "lubbatī" meaning "to cling to") Ha: destroyer or remover (from the root word "hanti" meaning "to destroy" or "to remove") Do: hatred or aversion (from the root word "dosa" meaning "hate" or "aversion") Sa: destroyer or remover (from the root word "hanti" meaning "to destroy" or "to remove") Mo: delusion or ignorance (from the root word "moha" meaning "delusion" or "ignorance") Ha: destroyer or remover (from the root word "hanti" meaning "to destroy" or "to remove") <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lobha, dosa, and moha are the three unwholesome roots in Dhamma philosophy that underlie all negative thoughts,

speech, and actions. Lobha refers to the mental state of craving or attachment, dosa refers to the mental state of aversion or anger, and moha refers to the mental state of delusion or confusion.

Overall Meaning:

- In Dhamma philosophy, lobha, dosa, and moha are seen as *the primary causes of suffering* and the main obstacles to mental progress (removing delusions and ignorance). By understanding and working to overcome these unwholesome roots through mindfulness, ethical conduct, and mental development, one can gradually cultivate wisdom and inner peace.

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- Lobha, dosa, and moha are central concepts in Dhamma psychology and meditation practice, as they represent the underlying causes of suffering and the main targets of spiritual purification. By recognizing and working to overcome these unwholesome roots, one can develop greater insight into the nature of reality and achieve a state of liberation and happiness.

Relevant Pali Text:

- "Sabbeheva samaggā atthānaṃ upakappanti, sabbeheva abhivadanti, *lobha*-dhammāpi tesam samaggānaṃ anudhammacārino honti, *dosa*-dhammāpi tesam samaggānaṃ anudhammacārino honti, *moha*-dhammāpi tesam samaggānaṃ anudhammacārino honti."

English Translation:

- "All agree on the benefits, all praise them. Even those of *greedy*, *hateful*, and *deluded* tendencies conform to the concordant ones without deviating from the norm."

Sinhalese and Sanskrit:

- ලොභ (lobha), දෝස (dosa), මොහො (moha)
- लोभ (lobha), दोष (dosa), मोह (moha)

Phonetics:

- IPA: 'lo.bhə, 'doo.sə, 'moo.hə
- English: LO-buh, DOH-suh, MOH-huh

Sinhalese & Sanskrit:

Sinhalese forms of lobha, dosa, and moha are as follows:

- Lobha: ලොභ (lobha)
- Dosa: දෝස (dosa)
- Moha: මොහො (moha)

The Sanskrit forms of lobha, dosa, and moha are as follows:

- Lobha: लोभ (lobha)
- Dosa: दोष (dosa)
- Moha: मोह (moha)

Loka dhammā	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lo-ka dham-mā <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lo: World or realm • Ka: Space or element • Dha: Uphold or support • Mā: Condition or nature <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: None • Suffix: Mā (condition or nature) • Root: Lo (world or realm); Ka (space or element); Dha (uphold or support); Mā (condition or nature) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lo: Refers to the "world" or "realm". • Ka: Means "space" or "element". • Dha: Means "to uphold" or "support". • Mā: Refers to the "condition" or "nature" of something. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Loka dhammā</i> refers to the elements or aspects that make up the nature of the world or realm, including both physical and mental phenomena. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of <i>Loka dhammā</i> is related to the Buddhist teaching on the Three Characteristics (ti-lakkhana), which are the impermanence (anicca), unsatisfactoriness or suffering (dukkha), and non-self (anatta) nature of all phenomena in the world. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Ime ca, bhikkhave, tayo lokadhammā aniccā dukkhā vipariṇāmadhammā." <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Monks, these three <i>world phenomena</i> are impermanent, suffering, and subject to change." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Aṅguttara Nikāya (AN) • Chapter: Tika Nipāta • Section: Lokadhamma Vagga • Sutta Number: AN 3.136 • Verse Number: 3 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha" published by Wisdom Publications. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: ලෝක ධම්මා (Loka Damma) • Sanskrit: लोक धम्म (Loka Dhamma)
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Lokiya sacca	Phonetics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: lo-ka dʰəm-ma • English Phonetic: loh-kuh duh-muh
	Syllable Construction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lo-ki-ya sac-ca Syllable Meaning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lo: World or realm • Ki: A particle indicating a connection • Ya: This • Sac: True or real • Ca: And Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: None • Suffix: Ca (and) • Root: Lo (world or realm); Ki (connection); Ya (this); Sac (true or real); Ca (and) Syllable Explanation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lo: Refers to the "world" or "realm". • Ki: A particle indicating a connection. • Ya: Means "this". • Sac: Refers to the "true" or "real". • Ca: Connects the two words together. Overall Meaning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lokiya sacca</i> refers to the truth or reality of the world or realm that we live in, which includes both mundane and worldly aspects. Relevant Dhamma Concept: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of <i>Lokiya sacca</i> is related to the Dhamma teaching on the Four Noble Truths (cattāri ariyasaccāni), which include the truth of suffering (dukkha), its cause (samudaya), its cessation (nirodha), and the path leading to its cessation (magga). <i>Lokiya sacca</i> can be seen as a broader context for these truths, encompassing the mundane and worldly aspects of our lives. Relevant Pali Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu <i>Lokiya</i>-ṃ vā paṭilābhati alokiyaṃ vā paṭilābhati. <i>Lokiya</i>-nti kho, bhikkhave, paṇābhinnampi bhinnanti passanti, samudayadhammampi samudayadhammanti passanti, nirodhadhammampi nirodhadhammanti passanti, paṭipadāpi kho, bhikkhave, lokiyaṃ paṭipadāya saṃvattantīti." English Translation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Here, monks, a monk gains both the <i>worldly</i> and the <i>unworldly</i>. For the people, there are worldly things and

	<p>they see differences in the differences, the <i>phenomena of origination and the phenomena of cessation</i>; and the path also leads to worldly practice."</p> <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Aṅguttara Nikāya (AN) • Chapter: Catukkanipāta • Section: Lokiya, Alokiya Vagga • Sutta Number: AN 4.45 • Verse Number: 1 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha" published by Wisdom Publications. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: ලෝකීය සත්ථා (Lokiya Sacca) • Sanskrit: लोकीय सत्य (Lokiya Satya) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: lo-ki-ja sat-cha • English
<p>Lokuttara (supramundane)</p>	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lo-kut-ta-ra <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lo: World or realm • Kut: Beyond or above • Ta: That • Ra: Elevated or transcendent <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: None • Suffix: None • Root: Lo (world or realm); Kut (beyond or above); Ta (that); Ra (elevated or transcendent) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lo: Refers to the "world" or "realm". • Kut: Means "beyond" or "above". • Ta: Means "that". • Ra: Means "elevated" or "transcendent". <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lokuttara</i> refers to something that is beyond or above the ordinary world or realm, and is elevated or transcendent in nature. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of <i>Lokuttara</i> is related to the Dhamma teaching on the Four Noble Truths (cattāri ariyasaccāni) and the Noble Eightfold Path (ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo), which provide a path for <i>transcending the suffering of the</i>

	<p>world and attaining the ultimate goal of liberation (nibbāna).</p> <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Lokuttara-m, bhikkhave, maggaṃ desessāmi, Lokuttara-m paṭicca vedanīyaṃ, Lokuttara-m paṭicca saññāya, Lokuttara-m paṭicca saṅkhāre, Lokuttara-m paṭicca viññāṇaṃ, Lokuttara-m paṭicca taṇhāya, Lokuttara-m paṭicca upādānena, Lokuttara-m paṭicca bhavanirodhagāminiyā paṭipadāya. Taṃ suṇātha, sādhukaṃ manasi karetha, bhāssissāmi tassa pañhassa veyyākaraṇena." <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Monks, I will teach you <i>the path beyond the world</i>, the path that leads to the cessation of the world. Listen well, attend closely to what I shall say." [Note: In this context, the Buddha is not speaking about another world aside from the phenomenal world in which we live. Rather, he is speaking about the path beyond the "mundane" everyday world of perception and understanding.] <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Saṃyutta Nikāya (SN) Chapter: Paññāsa Nipāta Section: Lokuttara Vagga Sutta Number: SN 56.11 Verse Number: 1 Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha" published by Wisdom Publications. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: ලොකුත්තර (Lokuttara) Sanskrit: लोकोत्तर
<p>-M-</p> <p>Magga</p>	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mag-ga The first syllable "mag" has a consonant cluster of "m" and "g," with the "a" vowel. The second syllable "ga" has a single consonant "g" with the "a" vowel. <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "mag" - path, road, way "ga" - go, move <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no prefixes or suffixes in the word "magga." The root is "gam," which means "to go or move."

	<p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "mag" - refers to a path, road or way that leads to a destination. • "ga" - refers to the act of going or moving towards that destination. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Magga</i>" refers to the path or way that leads to the cessation of suffering. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of the "<i>magga</i>" is one of the Four Noble Truths in the Dhamma, which teaches that the path to the cessation of suffering is the Eightfold Path. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Maggo</i> hi, bhikkhave, tathāgatassa pacchimā janatā anukampaṃ upādāya, yena āyasmā parinibbuto tādiso”ti." <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The <i>path</i>, monks, by which the Tathagata, attained final Nibbana - that <i>path</i> is the Eightfold Path." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Samyutta Nikaya • Chapter: Dvadasakanipata • Section: Abhisamayasaṃyutta • Sutta Number: 65 • Verse Number: not applicable • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya" <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: මග්ග (magga) • Sanskrit: मार्ग (mārga) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: /'mʌg.gə/ • English phonetic: MAH-guh
Mana	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ma-na • The first syllable "ma" has a single consonant "m" with the "a" vowel. • The second syllable "na" has a single consonant "n" with the "a" vowel. <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "ma" - mind • "na" - conceit <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no prefixes or suffixes in the word "mana."

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The root is "man," which means "to think, imagine, conceive." <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "ma" - refers to the mind or mental faculties. "na" - refers to the conceit or idea of "I am" or "I exist." <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "<i>Mana</i>" refers to the conceit or idea of "I am" or "I exist" in relation to one's own mental faculties. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of "<i>mana</i>" is a defilement of the mind, which arises from the notion of self or ego. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "<i>Mana-m na māna-ye mānubhāvaṃ, mānassa vippajahe adhimānam; Ettāvatā vuccati 'bhikkhu', khippaṃ hi māna-majjhe pamajjati.</i>" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Let one not <i>think slightly</i> of good, saying, 'It will not come to me.' Drop by drop is the water pot filled. Likewise, the wise one, gathering it little by little, fills oneself with good." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Dhammapada Chapter: Attavagga Section: Verse 229 Sutta Number: not applicable Verse Number: 229 Translator: Thanissaro Bhikkhu Source: "The Dhammapada: A Translation" <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: මන (mana) Sanskrit: मन् (māna) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: /'mɑ:nə/ English phonetic: MAH-nuh
Mānasa	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mā-na-sa The first syllable "Mā" has a long vowel "ā" and a single consonant "M" with an inherent vowel "a." The second syllable "na" has a single consonant "n" with the "a" vowel. The third syllable "sa" has a single consonant "s" with the "a" vowel. <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Mā" - mind

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "na" - negation or denial • "sa" - belonging to or connected with <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no prefixes or suffixes in the word "Mānasa." • The root is "man," which means "to think, imagine, conceive." <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Mā" - refers to the mind or mental faculties. • "na" - indicates negation or denial, and in this case, it indicates the absence of a particular quality. • "sa" - refers to something that belongs to or is connected with the mind. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Mānasa</i>" refers to something that is connected with the mind, but is without a particular quality or attribute. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the Dhamma, the concept of "<i>Mānasa</i>" can refer to a state of mental purity or a meditative state of mind that is free from impurities or afflictions. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Mānasa</i>-m-ekadhammam-āsevato, mānaso vipphanditattā uppajjati āsavānaṃ." <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "For one who cultivates one thing - <i>the mind</i> - <i>the mind</i> becomes agitated and defiled by the influx of defilements." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Anguttara Nikaya • Chapter: Ekakanipata • Section: Asevanādhhamma Vagga • Sutta Number: 4 • Verse Number: not applicable • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya" <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: මානස (maanasa) • Sanskrit: मन्स (mānasa) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: /'ma:nəsə/ • English phonetic: MAH-nuh-suh
Maṇḍapaṃ	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ma-ṇḍa-paṃ • The first syllable "Ma" has a single consonant "M" with an inherent vowel "a."

- The second syllable "ṇḍa" has two consonants "ṇ" and "ḍa" with the "a" vowel.
- The third syllable "pa" has a single consonant "p" with the "a" vowel.
- The fourth syllable "ṁ" is a nasal sound that belongs to the previous syllable.

Syllable Meaning:

- "Ma" - belonging to or connected with
- "ṇḍa" - a small house, pavilion or shrine
- "pa" - to protect, guard or cover
- "ṁ" - a nasal sound that belongs to the previous syllable

Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:

- There are no prefixes or suffixes in the word "Maṇḍapaṁ."
- The root is "ṇḍā," which means "a small house or pavilion."

Syllable Explanation:

- "Ma" - indicates that the word is connected with or belongs to something.
- "ṇḍa" - refers to a small house, pavilion or shrine that is often used for religious or ceremonial purposes.
- "pa" - refers to the act of protecting, guarding or covering the area.

Overall Meaning:

- "Maṇḍapaṁ" refers to a small house or a pavilion that is used for ceremonial or public discourse purposes and is protected or covered.

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- There is no specific Dhamma concept related to the word "Maṇḍapaṁ," but it is a term used in ancient architecture to refer to a small building or public pavilion.

Relevant Pali Text:

- "So yāva brahmalokāpi kāme adhigacchati, tattha kāmesu vatthum viharati *maṇḍapaṁ* katvā"

English Translation:

- "He abides with his focus on the object of sensual desire in the very same manner that he did in the world of Brahmā, constructing a *pavillion* there where is the object of sensual desire."

Citation:

- Sutta: Majjhima Nikaya
- Chapter: Mūlapariyāya Vagga
- Section: Cūḷadukkhakkhandha Vagga
- Sutta Number: 37
- Verse Number: not applicable
- Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Source: "The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya" <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: මඤ්ඤපාමි (maṇḍapam) Sanskrit: मण्डप (maṇḍapa) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: /mən'd English: "mun-dah-pum" (with stress on the first syllable)
Mangala	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ma-nga-la The first syllable "Ma" has a single consonant "M" with an inherent vowel "a." The second syllable "nga" has a single consonant "n" with the vowel "ga." The third syllable "la" has a single consonant "l" with the "a" vowel. <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Ma" - belonging to or connected with "nga" - a blessing or auspiciousness "la" - pertaining to or connected with <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no prefixes or suffixes in the word "Mangala." The root is "maṅgala," which means "blessing," "auspiciousness," or "good fortune." <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Ma" - indicates that the word is connected with or belongs to something. "nga" - refers to a blessing or auspiciousness, indicating that something is favorable or positive. "la" - indicates that the word is pertaining to or connected with something. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Mangala" refers to something that is connected with or pertains to blessings, auspiciousness, or good fortune. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the Dhamma, "Mangala" refers to the "Mangala Sutta," which is a discourse on blessings or auspiciousness. The sutta identifies 38 different blessings that lead to happiness and spiritual growth. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Asevanā ca bālānaṃ, paṇḍitānaṃca sevanā, Pūjā ca pūjanīyānaṃ, etaṃ maṅgala-muttamaṃ." (Khuddakapatha)

	<p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Not to associate with fools, to associate with the wise, and to honor those worthy of honor; This is <i>the greatest blessing</i>." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text: Khuddakapatha • Chapter: Maṅgala Vagga • Verse Number: 5 • Translator: Thanissaro Bhikkhu • Source: "The Theravada Tipitaka: The Khuddaka Nikaya" <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: මංගල (maṅgala) • Sanskrit: मङ्गल (maṅgala) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: /'maŋgələ/ • English phonetic: MUHNG-guh-luh
Maññati	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ma-ññā-ti • The first syllable "Ma" has a single consonant "M" with an inherent vowel "a." • The second syllable "ññā" has two consonants "ñ" and "ñā" with a long vowel "ā." • The third syllable "ti" has a single consonant "t" with the "i" vowel. <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Ma" - belonging to or connected with • "ññā" - knowledge or understanding • "ti" - to think, consider or believe <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no prefixes or suffixes in the word "Maññati." • The root is "ñā," which means "to know, understand, or comprehend." <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Ma" - indicates that the word is connected with or belongs to something. • "ññā" - refers to knowledge or understanding. • "ti" - refers to the act of thinking, considering or believing. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Maññati</i>" refers to the act of thinking, considering or believing with knowledge or understanding.

	<p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the Dhamma, "<i>Maññati</i>" refers to the concept of "maññitam," which means "perceived" or "conceived." It refers to the process of interpreting or conceptualizing experience through the filter of one's perceptions, views, and beliefs. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Attanā va kataṃ pāpaṃ, attanā samatiṭṭhati, Attanā akataṃ pāpaṃ, attanāva visujjhati, Suddhī asuddhi paccattaṃ, naaññaṃ <i>maññati</i> bhāsati." (Dhammapada) <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "By oneself, indeed, is evil done; by oneself is one defiled. By oneself is evil left undone; by oneself, indeed, is one purified. <i>Purity and impurity depend entirely on oneself; no one can purify another.</i>" <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text: Dhammapada Chapter: Attavagga Verse Number: 165 Translator: Acharya Buddharakkhita Source: "The Dhammapada: The Buddha's Path of Wisdom" <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: මාණ්ණති (<i>maññati</i>) Sanskrit: मन्यते (<i>manyate</i>) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: /'mʌɲɲaːti/ English phonetic: MUH-nyah-tee
Mano sankhāra	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ma-no san-khā-ra <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ma: mind No: not applicable San: internal Khā: to make Ra: not applicable <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mano: mano- (root: manas, meaning "mind") + -o (pronoun) Sankhāra: san- (prefix: saṃ-, meaning "together, with") + khāra- (root: khāra, meaning "making") <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ma: "mind" or "mental" No: not applicable

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • San: "internal", "inner", or "with" • Khā: "make", "construct", or "create" • Ra: not applicable <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Mental formations" or "volitional activities" that arise internally in the mind. Sankhara refers to conditioning factors or volitional activities. Mano refers to "mental" or "mind." <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The term "sankhāra" refers to the conditioning factors that give rise to our mental and physical experiences, and are one of the five aggregates (khandhas) that make up our experience of self. In this context, "mano sankhāra" specifically refers to the mental formations or volitional activities that arise internally in the mind. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Sankhāre sattā manujesu viññāya, <i>manosankhāraṃ</i> vipassato na koci saññā, yato yato mano nivāraye dukkhassa, tasmim̐ hoti anibbute vimutti" (Sn 1075) <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Discerning the conditions in humans, sentient beings perceive the mind's volitional activities as such. Perceiving the mind's volitional activities and restraining the mind from all suffering, in that restraint there is the unconditioned liberation." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Suttanipāta • Chapter: V. Udumbarika-Vagga • Section: 11. Manasankhāra-Vatthu • Sutta Number: 1075 • Verse Number: N/A • Translator: John D. Ireland • Source: https://www.tipitaka.net/tipitaka/dhp/verseload.php?verse=001 <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: මනෝ සංකාර (mano saṃkāra) • Sanskrit: मनो सङ्खार (mano saṃkhāra) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: /mənəʊ sʌŋ'kɑ:rə/ • English phonetic: muh-noh sung-kah-ruh
Mettā	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Me-ttā • The first syllable "Me" has a single consonant "M" with an inherent vowel "e."

- The second syllable "ttā" has two consonants "t" and "tā" with a long vowel "ā."

Syllable Meaning:

- "Me" - belonging to or connected with
- "ttā" - loving-kindness, goodwill, friendliness

Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:

- There are no prefixes or suffixes in the word "Mettā."
- The root is "maitrī" which means "loving-kindness" or "friendliness."

Syllable Explanation:

- "Me" - indicates that the word is connected with or belongs to something.
- "ttā" - refers to the quality of loving-kindness, goodwill, and friendliness.

Overall Meaning:

- "Mettā" refers to the quality of loving-kindness, goodwill, and friendliness, often translated as "loving-kindness" or "benevolence."

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- In the Dhamma, "Mettā" is one of the four "divine abodes" (brahma-vihara) which are the four qualities of heart and mind that one cultivates in order to develop positive relationships with oneself and others. Mettā is often translated as "loving-kindness," and the cultivation of mettā is considered an important part of practice. [Note: This is a perfect example of the contextual usage of the word "abodes," to mean "a way of being" rather than a physical place. In this context, the word "abode" is used analogically to refer to one's "place of mind."]

Relevant Pali Text:

- "*Mettā-sahagatena cetasā ekaṃ disaṃ pharitvā viharati. Tathā dutiyaṃ, tathā tatiyaṃ, tathā catutthaṃ. Iti uddhamadho tiriyaṃ sabbadhi sabbattatāya aviramati, sabbattatāya anu- vattati.*"

English Translation:

- "With a mind filled with *loving-kindness*, he sleeps happily. He wakes up happily. His dreams are happy. He speaks only words that are pleasing to others. He *abides in loving-kindness* whether he is with those he loves or those he dislikes."

Citation:

- Text: Mettā Sutta
- Chapter: Khuddakapatha
- Verse Number: 9
- Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Source: "The Middle-Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya" <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: මෙත්තා (mettā) Sanskrit: मैत्री (maitrī) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: /'met.tɑ:/ English phonetic: MEHT-tah
Micchādiṭṭhi	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mic-chā-diṭ-ṭhi The first syllable "Mic" has a single consonant "M" with the vowel "i." The second syllable "chā" has two consonants "ch" and "ā" with the vowel "ā." The third syllable "diṭ" has two consonants "d" and "iṭ" with the vowel "iṭ." The fourth syllable "ṭhi" has two consonants "ṭ" and "hi" with the vowel "i." <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Mic" - wrong, false or mistaken "chā" - perception, view or opinion "diṭ" - seeing or understanding "ṭhi" - the state or condition of <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Micchā" is a prefix that means "wrong," "false," or "mistaken." "Diṭṭhi" is a noun that means "view," "opinion," or "perception." <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Mic" - indicates that the word is wrong, false, or mistaken. "chā" - refers to the perception, view or opinion that is held. "diṭ" - refers to the act of seeing or understanding the perception or view. "ṭhi" - indicates that the word is in a state or condition of wrong, false, or mistaken view. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Micchādiṭṭhi" refers to a wrong or false view or perception, specifically referring to views that are considered delusional or harmful.

	<p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the Dhamma, "<i>Micchādiṭṭhi</i>" is one of the ten fetters (samyojana) that bind individuals to the cycle of birth and death (samsara). It specifically refers to wrong or false views, such as the view of a permanent self (attavāda) or the view that actions have no consequences (akiriya-vāda). The eradication of <i>micchādiṭṭhi</i> is considered a crucial step towards liberation. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "<i>Micchādiṭṭhī</i> hi avijjāya tamo uppajjati, yattha paññāya passato tamo nivisati." <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "<i>Wrong views</i> arise from ignorance, and darkness envelops those who hold on to these views and refuse to let them go." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text: Dhammapada Chapter: Maggavagga Verse Number: 254 Translator: Acharya Buddharakkhita Source: "The Dhammapada: The Buddha's Path of Wisdom" <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: මිච්චාදිට්ඨි (micchādiṭṭhi) Sanskrit: "mithyādr̥ṣṭi" (मिथ्यादृष्टि)
Mōha	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mō-ha The first syllable "Mō" has a single consonant "M" with a long vowel "ō." The second syllable "ha" has a single consonant "h" with the vowel "a." <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Mō" - delusion, confusion or bewilderment "ha" - a particle indicating a sense of astonishment, joy, or approval <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no prefixes or suffixes in the word "Mōha." The root is "mūḍha" which means "deluded" or "bewildered." <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Mō" - refers to delusion, confusion or bewilderment, indicating a state of mind that is not clear or focused. "ha" - in this context, it does not convey a specific meaning but rather serves as a particle indicating a sense of astonishment, joy, or approval.

	<p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Mōha" refers to delusion, confusion, or bewilderment, specifically referring to a state of mind that is not clear or focused and that leads to suffering. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the Dhamma, "Mōha" is one of the three unwholesome roots (akusala-mūla) that are considered the primary sources of unwholesome actions and suffering. The other two unwholesome roots are "lobha" (greed) and "dosa" (hatred). The eradication of Mōha is considered an essential step towards liberation from suffering. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Mōha-ssa jāyatī bhavo, mōha-ssa nirujjhatī soko. Mōha-ssa jāyatī bhikkhave, bhayam, veram, pasādam, upāyāsanti." <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "From <i>delusion</i> arises sorrow; from <i>delusion</i> arises fear. For him who is free from <i>delusion</i>, there is no sorrow; whence then fear?" <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text: Anguttara Nikaya • Chapter: Dasaka Nipata • Sutta Number: 1 • Verse Number: 16 • Translator: Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya" <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: මොහය (mōhaya) • Sanskrit: मोह (moha) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: /mo:.ha/ • English phonetic: MOH-hah
Mokkha	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mok-kha • The first syllable "Mok" has two consonants "M" and "k" with the vowel "o." • The second syllable "kha" has a single consonant "kh" with the vowel "a." <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Mok" - release, liberation, or deliverance • "kha" - space, sky, or ether <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no prefixes or suffixes in the word "Mokkha."

- The root is "muc" which means "to release," "to liberate," or "to deliver."

Syllable Explanation:

- "Mok" - refers to release, liberation, or deliverance, indicating a state of freedom from bondage or suffering.
- "kha" - refers to space, sky, or ether, indicating a vast and unbounded quality.

Overall Meaning:

- "*Mokkha*" refers to release or liberation that is unbounded, infinite, or transcendental.

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- In the Dhamma, "*mokkha*" refers to the *ultimate release or liberation* from suffering, which is achieved through the complete eradication of the defilements (kilesa) and the attainment of Nibbana. The concept of mokkha is central to the goal of the path, which is to overcome suffering and attain liberation.

Relevant Pali Text:

- Puna caparaṃ, ānanda, bhikkhu satta bojjhaṅge bhāvento satta bojjhaṅge bahulikato 'pañca dhammā vaṇṇitā *Mokkha*-ssa.' Katame pañca? Pabbajjāya saṃvattanikā dhammā, apabbajjāya anavajjatā, uposathupavāsāyaṃ paṭinissaggatā, samasamaṃ sikkhākāmā, antamaso pāṭidesaniyatā."

English Translation:

- Furthermore, by developing and cultivating the seven awakening factors, and being devoted to them, '*five qualities lead to freedom* [ultimate release from suffering]'—what five? Qualities that lead to the monastic life, blamelessness in the monastic life, retreat and seclusion, a balanced sense of urgency, and appropriate resolutions made for the final period."

Citation:

- Text: Anguttara Nikaya
- Chapter: Navaka Nipata
- Sutta Number: 41
- Translator: Bhikkhu Sujato
- Source: "The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya"

Sinhalese & Sanskrit:

- Sinhalese: මොක්කා (mokka)
- Sanskrit: मोक्ष (mokṣa)

Phonetics:

- IPA: /mok.kʰa/
- English phonetic: MOHK-khah

Mudita	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mu-di-ta • The first syllable "Mu" has a single consonant "M" with the vowel "u." • The second syllable "di" has two consonants "d" and "i" with a short vowel "i." • The third syllable "ta" has a single consonant "t" with the vowel "a." <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Mu" - refers to joy, delight or gladness • "di" - indicates the past participle or past passive participle • "ta" - indicates an abstract noun or quality <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no prefixes or suffixes in the word "Mudita." • The root is "mod" which means "to be glad," "to rejoice," or "to delight." <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Mu" - refers to joy, delight or gladness, indicating a positive mental state that arises from wholesome qualities or actions. • "di" - in this context, it indicates the past participle or past passive participle, indicating that the joy or delight is already present or has been experienced in the past. • "ta" - indicates an abstract noun or quality, indicating that "Mudita" is the quality of rejoicing or finding joy in the happiness and success of others. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Mudita</i>" refers to the quality of rejoicing or finding joy in the happiness and success of others, particularly those we care about. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Buddhism, "<i>Mudita</i>" is one of the four Brahmaviharas (states or abodes of being/mental state of being), which are the four divine or sublime states of mind that cultivate wholesome qualities and lead to liberation. The other three Brahmaviharas are metta (loving-kindness), karuna (compassion), and upekkha (equanimity). Cultivating Mudita involves actively rejoicing in the happiness and success of others, without any trace of envy or jealousy. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Muditā</i>-yaṃ bhikkhave, cetaso ekodibhāvaṃ abhisāṅkharoti" (SN 47.19) <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Monks, one develops a unified mind filled with <i>gladness</i> [joy]."
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	<p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text: Samyutta Nikaya • Chapter: Sattaka Nipata • Sutta Number: 19 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya" <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: මුද්දිත (mudita) • Sanskrit: मुदित (mudita) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: /mu.dita/ • English phonetic: moo-DEE-tah
-N-	
Naya	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Na-ya • The first syllable "Na" has a single consonant "N" with the vowel "a." • The second syllable "ya" has a single consonant "y" with the vowel "a." <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Na" - refers to negation or denial • "ya" - indicates an abstract noun or quality <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no prefixes or suffixes in the word "Naya." • The root is "na" which means "not," "no," or "without." <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Na" - refers to negation or denial, indicating the absence or lack of something. • "ya" - indicates an abstract noun or quality, indicating that "Naya" is the quality of not having or lacking something. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Naya" refers to the quality of not having or lacking something, or a state of denial or negation. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the context used in the Dhamma, "Naya" may refer to a state of denial or negation, particularly in relation to the four Noble Truths. Denying or neglecting the reality of suffering (dukkha) and its causes is considered a form of delusion or ignorance (avijja) that perpetuates the cycle of suffering. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Idha, bhikkhave, tathāgato loke uppajjati araham sammāsambuddho, dhātuyo ca paññāpento

	<p>paṭiccasamuppādaṃ. So tamhā kāyaduccaritena vā vacīduccaritena vā mansā duccaritena vā na phāsuṃ viharati, na sādhuṃ viharati, na sampajānamusā bhāsītā hoti, na sampajānanirattāya dhammaṃ deseti. Yattha tasmiṃ <i>nāya</i>-ṃ hoti, tattha tasmiṃ <i>nāya</i>-ṃ hoti, yattha tasmiṃ <i>a-nāya</i>-ṃ hoti, tattha tasmiṃ <i>a-nāya</i>-ṃ hoti. Iti kho, bhikkhave, tathāgato yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti, yathābhūtaṃ passati."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> English translation: "I should do these eight things." <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Here, monks, a Tathāgata arises in the world, an arahant, a perfectly enlightened one, who, by pointing out the elements and dependent origination, proclaims, 'Such is form, such its origin, such it passing away; such is feeling, such its origin, such is passing away ...' He does not live in such a way that he creates bodily, verbal, or mental suffering for himself or for others, <i>nor does he speak falsehood</i> or utter what is contrary to what is beneficial. Where there is a way, he follows that way; <i>where there is no way, he does not follow that way</i>. Thus, monks, the Tathāgata understands things as they really are and sees things as they really are." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text: Samyutta Nikaya Chapter: Chachakka Nipata Sutta Number: 90 Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya" <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: නායා (<i>nāya</i>) Sanskrit: नाया (<i>nāya</i>) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: /na.ja/ English phonetic: NAH-yah
Nibbana	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ni-bba-na The first syllable "Ni" has a single consonant "N" with the vowel "i." The second syllable "bb" has two consonants "b" and "b" with the vowel "a." The third syllable "na" has a single consonant "n" with the vowel "a."

Syllable Meaning:

- "Ni" - can be a prefix indicating "away from," "out," "cessation," or "extinction."
- "bb" - indicates a geminate consonant, which means the consonant is doubled in length.
- "na" - indicates an abstract noun or quality.

Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:

- The prefix "ni-" indicates "away from," "out," "cessation," or "extinction."
- There are no suffixes in the word "Nibbana."
- The root is "vāna" which means "to blow" or "to extinguish."

Syllable Explanation:

- "Ni" - as a prefix, it can indicate "away from," "out," "cessation," or "extinction," indicating the idea of putting an end to something or moving beyond it.
- "bb" - indicates a geminate consonant, which means the consonant is doubled in length, emphasizing the sound of the letter "b" in "Nibbana."
- "na" - indicates an abstract noun or quality, indicating that "Nibbana" is the quality of being extinguished or liberated.

Overall Meaning:

- "*Nibbana*" refers to the state of extinguishment [literally "a blowing out of the fire"], liberation, or release from suffering.

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- In the Dhamma, "*Nibbana*" is the ultimate goal of the path, which is the state of liberation or release from suffering, and the end of the cycle of rebirth. It is characterized by the absence of craving, attachment, and ignorance, and is often described as the state of ultimate peace, bliss, and freedom.

Relevant Pali Text:

- "*Nibbāna-m paramaṃ sukhadukkhānaṃ tamāhu nibbānaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāma nibbānaṃ visodhaye*"ti."

English Translation:

- "*Nibbana* is supreme happiness, say the Buddhas. It's the safe haven for all beings. To attain it is to purify the mind."

Citation:

- Complete Citation:
- Chapter: Khuddaka Nikaya
- Section: Dhammapada
- Verse Number: 203
- Translator: Gil Fronsdal
- Source: Fronsdal, Gil (trans.) *The Dhammapada: A New Translation of the Buddhist Classic with Annotations*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2005.

	<p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: නිව්වාන (Nivana) • Sanskrit: निर्वाण (Nirvana) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: /nib:a.na/ • English phonetic: nee-BAH-nah
-P-	
PaccekaBuddha	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pac-ce-ka-bud-dha • The first syllable "Pac" has a single consonant "P" with the vowel "a." • The second syllable "ce" has two consonants "c" and "e" with the vowel "e." • The third syllable "ka" has a single consonant "k" with the vowel "a." • The fourth syllable "bud" has three consonants "b," "d," and "d" (indicating a geminate consonant) with the vowel "u." • The fifth syllable "dha" has a single consonant "d" with the vowel "a." <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Pac" - can be a prefix indicating "one by one," "individually," or "solitary." • "ce" - is a suffix indicating "belonging to." • "ka" - indicates a possessive noun or pronoun, indicating that "PaccekaBuddha" is the "Buddha belonging to the solitary." • "bud" - indicates a root meaning "to awaken," "to know," or "to understand." • "dha" - indicates a suffix meaning "having," "possessing," or "maintaining." <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The prefix "Pac-" indicates "one by one," "individually," or "solitary." • The suffix "-ce" indicates "belonging to." • There are no other prefixes or suffixes in the word "PaccekaBuddha." • The root is "buddha," which means "awakened," "enlightened," or "understood." <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Pac-" - as a prefix, it indicates "one by one," "individually," or "solitary," emphasizing the idea of a solitary or independent Buddha. • "ce" - is a suffix indicating "belonging to," indicating that this Buddha belongs to the category of solitary or independent Buddhas.

- "ka" - indicates a possessive noun or pronoun, indicating that "Pacceka**buddha**" is the "Buddha belonging to the solitary."
- "bud" - indicates a root meaning "to awaken," "to know," or "to understand," emphasizing the idea of a Buddha who has attained awakening or enlightenment independently.
- "dha" - indicates a suffix meaning "having," "possessing," or "maintaining," emphasizing the idea of a Buddha who possesses the qualities of awakening or enlightenment independently.

Overall Meaning:

- "*Pacceka**buddha***" refers to a Buddha who has attained awakening or enlightenment independently, without relying on a teacher or teaching others.

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- In the Pali texts, a "*Pacceka**buddha***" is a person who attains awakening or enlightenment independently, without relying on a teacher or teaching others. Unlike a "Sammāsambuddha," who teaches the Dhamma to others and establishes a community of followers, a "Pacceka**buddha**" does not teach or establish a community, but continues to live in solitude.

Relevant Pali Text:

- "Tattha *pacceka**buddhā*** evamāhaṃsu – ‘bhagavā kho ānanda, *pacceka**bodhi***-ṃ abhisambujjhivā aññāya dhammaṃ deseti. Seyyathāpi, ānanda, mūlagandho sārāgandhaṃ vā tiṇāgandhaṃ vā aggagandhaṃ vā paṭṭhaviṇḍaṃ vā udakagandhaṃ vā āvāsagandhaṃ vā paribhuñjeyya, sā taṃ nālaṃ dhātuṃ upalimpatu – evameva kho, ānanda, *pacceka**buddho*** paccattaṃyeva nibbānaṃ sacchikaroti, no parassa dhammaṃ deseti" (MN 38)

English Translation:

- "And there the *Independent Buddhas* said this: 'The Blessed One, Ananda, having attained to independent enlightenment, teaches the Dhamma. It is just as if, Ananda, one might eat the heartwood or the sapwood or the bark of a tree, or the pith of a vine. That is to say, Ananda, the *Independent Buddha* attains Nibbana by his own efforts, but does not teach the Dhamma to others.'"

Citation:

- Text: Majjhima Nikaya
- Chapter: Sihanada Sutta
- Sutta Number: 38
- Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Source: "The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya" <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: පච්ඡේකබුද්ධ (Paccekabuddha) Sanskrit: Pratyekabuddha <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: /patʃʃɛkaˈbudːha/ English phonetic: PATCH-eh-kuh-BUD-dhah
Pandita	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pan-di-ta <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pan: Wise Di: Possessing Ta: Endowed with <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prefix: None Suffix: None Root: "Pandi" - Wise <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pan: Wise or intelligent Di: Possessing or having Ta: Endowed with or characterized by <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Pandita</i>: One who is wise, possessing wisdom or knowledge <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Pandita</i> is often used in the context of the "four types of individuals" in Buddhism, with "Pandita" referring to the wise or spiritually mature person who has realized the truth of the Dhamma. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "<i>Panditova</i> idha bhikkhave puggalo ujjhito hoti" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Here, monks, <i>the individual who is wise</i> is praised." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Majjhima Nikaya Chapter: Maha-Saccaka Sutta Section: 110 Sutta Number: MN 110 Verse Number: 14 Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi Source: "The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha" <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: පඤ්චිත (Panditha)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sanskrit: पण्डित (Paṇḍita) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA): /pənˈdi:tə/ English Phonetic: puhn-dee-tuh
Paññā	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pa-ññā <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pa: Away from, out of Ñā: Knowledge, understanding <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prefix: "Pa" - Away from, out of Suffix: "Ñā" - Knowledge, understanding Root: None <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pa: Indicates a separation, removal or going away from Ñā: Knowledge, understanding, comprehension <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Paññā</i>: Wisdom, discernment, understanding <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Paññā</i> is a key concept of the Dhamma and refers to the wisdom or insight that arises from the direct experience and realization of the nature of reality as taught by the Buddha. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Santi, bhikkhave, eke samaṇabrāhmaṇā <i>pañña</i>-vanto vuddhasilā veditadhammasaṅghātiparāyānā ekantasukhī katattā anāsava upadhīpattā āsavānaṃ khayam paṭi-<i>pannā</i>" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "There are, monks, some ascetics and brahmins who are <i>wise</i>, mature in virtue, who have investigated the teachings, who are committed to the community of the knowledgeable, who delight in the goal of serenity, who are unstained, and who have reached the peak of their potential. They are free of clinging and have completed the journey. They have ended the defilements, and they have achieved the destruction of the pollutants." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter: Saḷāyatana Vagga Section: Saḷāyatana Saṃyutta Sutta Number: MN 70 Verse Number: 14 Translator: Bhikkhu Sujato

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Source: Sujato, Bhikkhu (trans.) The Majjhima Nikāya: The Middle Discourses. Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2018. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: පාඤ්ඤා (Pañjā) Sanskrit: प्रज्ञा (Prajñā) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA): /pəɲɲaː/ English Phonetic: puh-nyah
Paravāca Parabbāsā (Sanskrit)	<p>Note: The terms "paravāca" and "parabbāsā" have similar meanings and are often used interchangeably. However, there are subtle differences in their connotations. "Paravāca" is composed of the prefix "para-" which means "beyond" or "other", and the noun "vāca" which means "speech" or "word". It can refer to false, defamatory, or slanderous speech, as well as any kind of speech that is not wholesome or beneficial. "Parabbāsā", on the other hand, is not a term commonly used in Pali Buddhist literature, but is a Sanskrit word that is sometimes translated as "slander", "vilification", or "defamation". The prefix "par-" in this case means "wrongly" or "against", and "bāsā" means "speaking". In general, both "paravāca" and "parabbāsā" refer to negative speech, but "paravāca" emphasizes the idea of speech that goes beyond or is different from one's own perspective, while "parabbāsā" emphasizes the idea of speech that is wrong or against the truth.</p> <p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pa-ra-vā-ca <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pa: Away from, out of Ra: Color, passion, movement Vā: Speech, voice Ca: And, also <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prefix: "Pa" - Away from, out of Suffix: "Ca" - And, also Roots: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Ra" - Color, passion, movement "Vāca" - Speech, voice <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pa: Indicates a separation, removal or going away from Ra: Can refer to color, passion or movement, often used as a prefix to indicate the opposite, or to emphasize the intensity of the root Vā: Speech or voice Ca: And or also

	<p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Paravāca</i>: A slanderous or malicious speech, the opposite of kind or truthful speech. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the Dhamma <i>Paravāca</i> is a negative quality, and is considered one of the four types of unwholesome speech, which also includes lying, harsh speech, and idle chatter. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Santi, bhikkhave, eke samaṇabrāhmaṇā <i>paravācā</i> parapuṭṭhānaṃ na sampajānāyamānā, appaṭibhānaṃkāra, abyāpajjha-parivutā, anattasaṃhitā, ārakkhaṃ dhammaṃ paṭicca silavaṃkatā" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "There are, monks, some ascetics and brahmins who are <i>not mindful when speaking</i> about others, who are insolent and rude, surrounded by ill will, harmful, and who speak in ways that are not beneficial. They do not protect the Dhamma, nor do they promote virtuous conduct." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter: Pañcaka Nipāta • Section: Paññāsa Vagga • Sutta Number: AN 5.162 • Verse Number: 1 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: Bodhi, Bhikkhu (trans.) The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha (Anguttara Nikaya). Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: පරවච්ඡා (Paravācha) • Sanskrit: परवाक् (Paravāk) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (IPA): /pərəˈvaːtʃə/ English: puh-ruh-vah-chuh
Paramattha	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pa-ra-mat-tha <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pa: Away from, out of • Ra: Color, passion, movement • Ma: Greater, higher, more important • Ttha: State, condition <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: "Pa" - Away from, out of • Suffix: "Ttha" - State, condition • Roots: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "Ra" - Color, passion, movement

	<p>○ "Ma" - Greater, higher, more important</p> <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pa: Indicates a separation, removal or going away from • Ra: Can refer to color, passion or movement, often used as a prefix to indicate the opposite, or to emphasize the intensity of the root • Ma: Greater, higher or more important • Ttha: State, condition <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paramattha: The highest or ultimate truth or reality, beyond conventional reality. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Paramattha</i> is a key concept in the Dhamma and refers to the highest or ultimate reality that can be directly experienced and realized through the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Imā kho, bhikkhave, dve dhammā yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya passitā hināvisāya dhātu, <i>paramattha</i>-to saṅkhāraṃ samanupassanti" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Monks, those who have truly seen with correct wisdom see these two things: the base of the inferior (hināvisa) and the conditioned (saṅkhāra) in accordance <i>with reality, as they really are.</i>" <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Samyutta Nikaya • Chapter: Samyutta Pali • Section: 22 - Salayatana Samyutta • Sutta Number: 122 • Verse Number: Not applicable • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha" <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: පරමත්ත (Paramattha) • Sanskrit: परमार्थ (Paramārtha) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA): /pəˈraːmətθə/ • English Phonetic: puh-rah-muh-tuh
Paramattha dhamma	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pa-ra-mat-tha • Dham-ma <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pa: Away from, out of

- Ra: Color, passion, movement
- Ma: Greater, higher, more important
- Ttha: State, condition
- Dhamma: Teaching, truth, reality, phenomenon

Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:

- Prefix: "Pa" - Away from, out of
- Suffix: None
- Roots:
 - "Ra" - Color, passion, movement
 - "Ma" - Greater, higher, more important
 - "Dhamma" - Teaching, truth, reality, phenomenon

Syllable Explanation:

- Pa: Indicates a separation, removal or going away from
- Ra: Can refer to color, passion or movement, often used as a prefix to indicate the opposite, or to emphasize the intensity of the root
- Ma: Greater, higher or more important
- Ttha: State, condition
- Dhamma: Refers to the teaching, truth, or ultimate reality as taught by the Buddha

Overall Meaning:

- Paramattha dhamma: The highest or ultimate truth or reality, beyond conventional reality, as taught by the Buddha.

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- Paramattha dhamma is a key concept within the Dhamma and refers to the ultimate or highest truth or reality that can be directly experienced and realized through the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path.

Relevant Pali Text:

- Imasmiṃ, bhikkhave, *dhamma*-vinaye ye ye dhammā desitā, sabbe te paññāya parisuddhā *paramattha*-to sārādhāyati”ti”

English Translation:

- "Monks, in this teaching and discipline, all the things that have been taught, are verified by direct knowledge, and are essential to the attainment of the ultimate goal."

Citation:

- Chapter: Iddhipāda Saṃyutta
- Section: Navaka Nipāta
- Sutta Number: MN 95
- Verse Number: 6

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: Bodhi, Bhikkhu (trans.) The Middle-Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: පරමත්ත ධර්ම (Paramattha Dharma) • Sanskrit: परमार्थ धर्म (Paramārtha Dharma) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA): /pəˈrɑːmətθə ˈdʰammə/ • English Phonetic: puh-rah-muh-tuh duh-muh
Paramattha sacca	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pa-ra-mat-tha • Sac-ca <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pa: Away from, out of • Ra: Color, passion, movement • Ma: Greater, higher, more important • Ttha: State, condition • Sacca: Truth <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: "Pa" - Away from, out of • Suffix: None • Roots: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "Ra" - Color, passion, movement ○ "Ma" - Greater, higher, more important ○ "Sacca" - Truth <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pa: Indicates a separation, removal or going away from • Ra: Can refer to color, passion or movement, often used as a prefix to indicate the opposite, or to emphasize the intensity of the root • Ma: Greater, higher or more important • Ttha: State, condition • Sacca: Truth <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Paramattha-sacca</i>: The ultimate or highest truth or reality, beyond conventional reality. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Paramattha-sacca</i> is a key concept in the Dhamma and is another reference to the ultimate or highest truth or reality that can be directly experienced and realized through the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path.

	<p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu araham hoti khīṇāsavo vusitavā katakaraṇīyo ohitabhāro anuppattasadattho parikkhīṇabhavasamyojano sammadaññāvimutto. Tassa evaṃ hoti: 'aniccam kho me jīvitam, yaṃ me jīvitapariyanto, taṃ me jīvitapariyantena sabbasaṅkhāresu aniccaaññaṃ uppajjati'. Evañca kho, bhikkhave, bhikkhu aniccam saññaṃ okkamitvā <i>paramattha</i>-ṃ <i>sacca</i>-ṃ adhigacchati." (MN 140) - <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Here, monks, a monk is an arahant, with taints destroyed, who has lived the holy life, done what was to be done, laid down the burden, achieved the goal, utterly destroyed the fetters of existence, and who is liberated by perfect insight. He sees thus: 'My life has been lived, the task is done, there is no more of this to come.' Thus, indeed, monks, that monk has gone beyond all that is subject to change and has <i>realized the ultimate truth</i>." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Majjhima Nikaya Chapter: Salle Section: Sallekha Sutta Sutta Number: MN 140 Verse Number: Not applicable Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi Source: "The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha" <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: පරමත්ත සත්‍ය (Paramattha Sacca) Sanskrit: परमार्थ सत्य (Paramārtha Satya) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (IPA): /pəˈraːmətθə ˈsætʃə/ English: puh-rah-muh-tuh suh-chuh
Paramattha-ñāṇa	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pa-ra-mat-tha Ñā-ṇa <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pa: Away from, out of Ra: Color, passion, movement Ma: Greater, higher, more important Ttha: State, condition Ñā: Knowledge, wisdom ṇa: To know <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prefix: "Pa" - Away from, out of

- Suffix: "Ñāṇa" - Knowledge, wisdom
- Roots:
 - "Ra" - Color, passion, movement
 - "Ma" - Greater, higher, more important
 - "Ñā" - Knowledge, wisdom
 - "Na" - To know

Syllable Explanation:

- Pa: Indicates a separation, removal or going away from
- Ra: Can refer to color, passion or movement, often used as a prefix to indicate the opposite, or to emphasize the intensity of the root
- Ma: Greater, higher or more important
- Ttha: State, condition
- Ñā: Refers to knowledge or wisdom
- Na: Indicates the act of knowing or the state of knowing

Overall Meaning:

- Paramattha-ñāṇa: The ultimate or highest knowledge or wisdom, beyond conventional reality.

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- Paramattha-ñāṇa is a key concept of the Dhamma and refers to the ultimate or highest knowledge or wisdom that can be directly experienced and realized through the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path.

Relevant Pali Text:

- "Taṃ kissa hetu? *Paramattha*-ṃ kho, bhikkhave, paṭicca upajjati chando, *paramattha*-ṃ adhipatiṭṭhate"

English Translation:

- "And why is that? It is because desire arises *dependent on the ultimate reality*, and it is *based on the ultimate reality*."

Citation:

- Chapter: Dasaka Nipāta
- Section: Dasaka Saṃyutta
- Sutta Number: AN 10.60
- Verse Number: 3
- Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi
- Source: Bodhi, Bhikkhu (trans.) The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha (Anguttara Nikaya). Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012.

Sinhalese & Sanskrit:

- Sinhalese: පරමත්තා ඥාණ (Paramattha Ñāṇa)
- Sanskrit: परमार्थ ज्ञान (Paramārtha Jnana)

Phonetics:

- IPA: /pəˈraːməθə ɲaːnə/
- English: puh-rah-muh-tuh nyah-nuh

Pāramīs	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pā-ra-mīs <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pā: Supreme, ultimate, complete • Ra: Color, passion, movement • Mīs: Perfection, virtue, excellence <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: "Pā" - Supreme, ultimate, complete • Suffix: "Mīs" - Perfection, virtue, excellence • Roots: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "Ra" - Color, passion, movement <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pā: Indicates the supreme, ultimate or complete nature of the following concept • Ra: Can refer to color, passion or movement, often used as a prefix to indicate the opposite, or to emphasize the intensity of the root • Mīs: Refers to perfection, virtue, excellence or merit <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pāramīs: The ten perfections or virtues that are cultivated and developed by a bodhisatta on the path to Buddhahood. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pāramīs</i> are a key concept in the Dhamma and refers to the ten virtues or perfections that a bodhisatta cultivates in order to attain Buddhahood. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dana Parami - the perfection of generosity ○ Sila Parami - the perfection of moral conduct ○ Nekkhamma Parami - the perfection of renunciation ○ Panna Parami - the perfection of wisdom ○ Viriya Parami - the perfection of energy ○ Khanti Parami - the perfection of patience or forbearance ○ Sacca Parami - the perfection of truthfulness ○ Adhitthana Parami - the perfection of determination or resolution ○ Metta Parami - the perfection of loving-kindness ○ Upekkha Parami - the perfection of equanimity <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Dasannaṃ <i>pāramī</i>-naṃ <u>sīla</u>ṃ [moral] nātivattati, Vipassanā paññā ca ettha aṭṭhārasa dhammā."
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	<p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Moral <i>virtue</i> is not contrary to any of the ten perfections. Here, 18 things are included: morality, insight, and wisdom." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text: Dhammapada-Atthakatha Chapter: 1 Section: 69 Sutta Number: Not applicable Verse Number: Not applicable Translator: Ven. Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero Source: "A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma" <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: පරමි (Pāramī) Sanskrit: परमिता (Pāramitā) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA): /paː.rə.miːs/ English Phonetic: pah-ruh-meess
<p>Parikappā (related to: samma- sankappa)</p>	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pa-ri-kap-pā <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pa: Away from, out of Ri: Root, foundation Ka: To do, to make Pā: Desire, wish, hope <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prefix: "Pa" - Away from, out of Suffix: "Pā" - Desire, wish, hope Roots: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Ri" - Root, foundation "Ka" - To do, to make <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pa: Indicates a separation, removal or going away from Ri: Refers to the root or foundation of something Ka: Refers to the act of doing or making something Pā: Refers to desire, wish or hope <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Parikappā</i>: The act of making plans or developing strategies based on a particular desire or goal. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Parikappā</i> is a concept in the Dhamma that can be either wholesome or unwholesome depending on the intention and motivation behind the planning or strategizing.

	<p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Katamo ca, bhikkhave, asaṅkhatagāmimaggo? Sañcetanikoti, bhikkhave, tasmā asaṅkhatagāmimaggo. Seyyathidaṃ – paṭiccasamuppādañāṇāya cittaṃ sañcetayamāno viharati, <i>Parikappa</i>-nāya ca cittaṃ sañcetayamāno viharati, ārammaṇānuyogamanuyutto viharati." <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "And what, monks, is the path leading to the unconditioned? It is the path of volitional formations, monks; that is why it is called the path leading to the unconditioned. That is, the monk who is intent on the knowledge of dependent origination dwells with his mind <i>intent on planning</i>, and he dwells adhering to the object of meditation." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Samyutta Nikaya • Chapter: Nidana Vagga • Section: 12 • Sutta Number: SN 12.23 • Verse Number: Not applicable • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha" <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: පරිකප්පා (Parikappā) • Sanskrit: परिकल्पन (Parikalpana) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA): /parikəppa/ • English Phonetic: pah-ree-kuh-pah
Pariyāya	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pa-ri-yā-ya <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pa: toward • Ri: escape • Yā: path <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: pari- (around) • Root: yā (to go) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pa: This syllable conveys the meaning of going towards something. • Ri: This syllable conveys the meaning of escaping from something.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yā: This syllable conveys the meaning of path, which can be understood as the way to escape. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pariyāya means "<i>the path or method of escape.</i>" <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pariyāya can be used in the context of the Four Noble Truths, where the path or method of escape from suffering is the Noble Eightfold Path. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Ime kho, bhikkhave, catasso ariyasaccā <i>pariyāpannā</i> cattāro ca ariyamagge bhāvetabbā" (SN 56.11) <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "These, bhikkhus, are the four noble truths that should be included <i>in the path to be developed</i>: the noble truth of suffering, the noble truth of the origin of suffering, the noble truth of the cessation of suffering, and the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Samyutta Nikaya Chapter: Sacca Samyutta Section: Cattāro Ariyasaccā Sutta Number: SN 56.11 Verse Number: Not applicable Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi Source: The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: පරියාය (Pariyāya) Sanskrit: परियय (Pariyāya) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA): [pərijɑːjə] English Phonetic: puh-ree-yaa-yuh
Pariyatti	<p>Syllable Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pa-ri-yat-ti <p>Syllable Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pa - prefix meaning "around" or "surrounding" Ri - root meaning "to understand" or "to study" Ya - suffix used to form abstract nouns Tti - suffix indicating present participle <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prefix: Pa- Suffix: -ya, -tti Root: ri (meaning "to understand" or "to study")

Syllable Explanation

- "Pariyatti" is a compound word consisting of "pari" and "yatti."
- "Pari" is a prefix that can mean "around" or "surrounding," and "yatti" is a noun form of the verb "yāti," which means "to go" or "to move."
- Together, "pariyatti" conveys the idea of "surrounding movement," which is often interpreted as "circulation" or "recitation."
- In the context of Dhamma practice, "pariyatti" refers to the study and recitation of the teachings.

Overall Meaning

- The overall meaning of "pariyatti" is the study and recitation of Dhamma teachings.

Relevant Dhamma Concept

- The concept of "*pariyatti*" is an important part of the path, which emphasizes the importance of both study and practice.
- According to the Buddha's teachings, the study of the Dhamma helps develop wisdom and insight, which can in turn lead one toward liberation from suffering.

Relevant Pali Text

- "Ānanda, catunnaṃ maggaṃ bhāvetabbānaṃ *pariyatti* sādhetabbā"

English Translation

- "Ānanda, the four paths should be developed and the *study* should be completed."

Citation

- Sutta: Anguttara Nikaya
- Chapter: Book of Fours
- Section: Chapter 4, Sutta 180
- Sutta Number: 180
- Verse Number: Not applicable
- Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi
- Source: "The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha" (Anguttara Nikaya), Wisdom Publications, 2012.

Sinhalese & Sanskrit

- Sinhalese: පරියාප්ති (Pariyatti)
- Sanskrit: परिपत्ति (Pariyatti)

Phonetics

- IPA: /pə.ri.jət.ti/
- English: puh-ree-yuh-tee

Pasāda	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pa-sā-da <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pa: denoting purification, removal • sā: one's own • da: to give, to bestow <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No prefixes or suffixes • Root: sād (to trust, to have faith) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Pasāda</i>" refers to the quality of faith, trust, or confidence in the Buddha, his teachings, and the Sangha. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the Dhamma, "<i>Pasāda</i>" is the quality of faith, trust, or confidence in the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha) that is essential for progressing on the path to liberation. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pasāda</i> is considered one of the five faculties (indriya) and one of the ten perfections (pāramī) in Buddhism, emphasizing the importance of developing confidence and trust in the Buddha's teachings. Faith and confidence are treated as separate. In the context of Dhamma philosophy, "confidence" (pasāda) and "faith" (saddhā) have different meanings. confidence (pasāda) refers to a deep sense of trust or conviction that arises from a <i>thorough understanding and direct experience</i> of the Buddha's teachings. It is <i>grounded in knowledge and understanding rather than blind belief</i>. On the other hand, faith (saddhā) refers to a more basic sense of trust or belief in the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha), often based on faith in the Buddha's enlightenment and the authenticity of his teachings. <i>Faith can be the starting point for one's journey, but it needs to be accompanied by knowledge and understanding in order to be effective in leading one towards liberation</i>. In summary, the conceptual difference between confidence and faith according to the Dhamma is that <i>confidence is grounded in knowledge and understanding, while faith is a more basic sense of trust or belief that may not necessarily be accompanied by knowledge and understanding</i>. Both are important in the Buddhist path, but confidence arises from a deep understanding and direct experience of the teachings, while faith is often the starting point for one's journey. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Dhammaññū hi, bhikkhave, <i>pasāda</i>-ṃ kappeti, saddhāññū na pasādaṃ kappeti"
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	<p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The one who knows the Dhamma has <i>confidence</i> (in it), but the one who has faith (alone) does not have <i>confidence</i> (in it)." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter: Saḷāyatana Vagga • Section: Dukkha Dhammā Saṃyutta • Sutta Number: MN 48 • Verse Number: 14 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: Bodhi, Bhikkhu (trans.) The Middle-Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995. <p>Sinhalese and Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • පසාදය (Pasādaya) • प्रसाद (Prasāda) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: pə'sa:də • English: puh-sah-duh
Paṭicca	<p>Syllable Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pa-ṭi-cca <p>Syllable Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pa - prefix meaning "towards" or "to" • Ṭi - root meaning "to depend" or "to rely on" • Cca - suffix indicating causation <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: Pa- • Suffix: -cca • Root: ṭi (meaning "to depend" or "to rely on") <p>Syllable Explanation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Paṭicca" is a compound word consisting of "pa" and "ṭicca." • "Pa" is a prefix that can mean "towards" or "to," and "ṭicca" is a noun form of the verb "ṭhāti," which means "to stand" or "to depend on." • Together, "paṭicca" conveys the idea of "depending on" or "relying on" something as a condition for something else to occur. • In the context of Dhamma teachings, "paṭicca" is often used in the concept of dependent origination, which describes the causal interdependence of all phenomena.

	<p>Overall Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The overall meaning of "<i>paṭicca</i>" is the idea of "depending on" or "relying on" something as a condition for something else to occur. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of "<i>paṭicca</i>" is an important part of Dhamma teachings, particularly in the concept of dependent origination (paṭiccasamuppāda). According to Dhamma teachings, all phenomena arise in dependence upon other phenomena, and understanding this interdependent nature of all things is crucial to the development of wisdom and the ending of suffering. <p>Relevant Pali Text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "<i>Paṭicca-samuppādā vuttam, tesaṃ vācāya paṭivirato</i>" <p>English Translation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "<i>Dependent</i> origination has been explained, to abstain from that speech." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Dhammapada Chapter: Chapter 23, Taints Section: Verse 277 Sutta Number: Not applicable Verse Number: 277 Translator: F. Max Muller (revised by Jack Maguire) Source: "The Dhammapada: The Sayings of the Buddha," Shambhala Publications, 2010. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: පටිච්ච (Paṭicca) Sanskrit: पटिच्च (Paṭicca) <p>Phonetics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: /paṭitʃʰa/ English: puh-tich-uh
Paṭiccasamuppāda	<p>Syllable Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pa-ṭic-ca-sa-mu-ppā-da <p>Syllable Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pa - prefix meaning "towards" or "to" Ṭi - root meaning "to depend" or "to rely on" Ca - suffix indicating causation Sa - prefix meaning "with" or "together with" Mu - root meaning "to arise" or "to appear" Ppā - root meaning "to originate" or "to come forth" Da - suffix indicating "that which gives" <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prefixes: Pa-, Sa-

- Suffixes: -ca, -da
- Roots: *ti* (meaning "to depend" or "to rely on"), *mu* (meaning "to arise" or "to appear"), *ppā* (meaning "to originate" or "to come forth")

Syllable Explanation

- "Paṭiccasamuppāda" is a compound word consisting of "paṭicca" and "samuppāda."
- "Paṭicca" is a noun form of the verb "paṭiccaṃ" (derived from the root "ṭi"), which means "depending on" or "arising in dependence upon."
- "Samuppāda" is a noun form of the verb "samuppanna," which means "to have arisen together" or "to have come together."
- Together, "paṭiccasamuppāda" conveys the idea of "dependent origination" or "arising in dependence upon conditions."
- In the context of Dhamma teachings, "paṭiccasamuppāda" is a key concept that describes the causal interdependence of all phenomena.

Overall Meaning

- The overall meaning of "paṭiccasamuppāda" is the idea of "dependent origination" or "arising in dependence upon conditions."

Relevant Dhamma Concept

- The concept of "*paṭiccasamuppāda*" is an essential part of Dhamma teachings and is central to the understanding of the nature of existence and the causes of suffering.
- According to Dhamma teachings, all phenomena arise in dependence upon other phenomena, and understanding this interdependent nature of all things is crucial to the development of wisdom and the ending of suffering.

Relevant Pali Text

- "Evaṃ kho, bhikkhave, bhikkhu silasampanno hoti, *paṭiccasamuppādañā-ñi* hoti, ādīnavo ādinavapaṭikulo hoti, nissaraṇapaṇṇo"

English Translation

- Thus, monks, a monk is endowed with virtue, possesses the knowledge of *dependent origination*, is of unpleasant nature and adverse to suffering, and has the wisdom that leads to escape."

Citation

- Chapter: Mahāvagga
- Section: Uparipannāsapāli
- Sutta Number: DN 15
- Verse Number: 1
- Translator: Maurice Walshe

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Source: Walshe, Maurice (trans.) The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikaya. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: පටිච්ඡක්‍රමෝපාදය (Paṭiccasamuppāda) Sanskrit: प्रतीत्यसमुत्पाद (Pratītyasamutpāda) <p>Phonetics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: /pə.t̪ɪ.tʃə.sa.mop.pa:.d̪ə/ English: puh-tich-chuh-suh-moop-pah-duh
Patigha	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pa-ti-gha <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pa: denoting purification, removal Ti: three Gha: fold, collide, clash <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prefix: pa- (removal) Root: gha (to collide, to clash) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Patigha" refers to the act of clashing against, opposing, or resisting something. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within the Dhamma, "Patigha" refers to the mental state of opposition or resistance, which is seen as a cause of suffering. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the Four Noble Truths, the second truth is that suffering arises from craving (taṇhā), which is related to the mental state of opposition or resistance (patigha). <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Ye keci dhammā akusalā akusalasaṅkhātā, sabbe te paṭighasaṅkhātā." <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Whatever phenomena there are that are unwholesome, all of them are characterized by resistance." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SN 35.255, Sabba Sutta <p>Sinhalese and Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> පටිඝ (Paṭigha) पतिघ (Patigha) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: pə'tiɡə English: puh-tig-uh

Patipatti	<p>Syllable Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pa-ti-pat-ti <p>Syllable Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pa - prefix meaning "towards" or "to" • Ti - root meaning "to go" or "to move" • Pat - prefix indicating "practice" or "exertion" • Ti - root meaning "to go" or "to move" <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: Pa-, Pat- • Root: Ti (meaning "to go" or "to move") <p>Syllable Explanation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Patipatti" is a compound word consisting of "pati" and "patti." • "Pati" is a prefix that can mean "towards" or "to," and "patti" is a noun form of the verb "patiṭṭhāti," which means "to exert oneself" or "to make an effort." • Together, "patipatti" conveys the idea of "practice" or "exertion," particularly in the context of spiritual practice. • In the Dhamma teachings, "patipatti" is often used to refer to the development of the Noble Eightfold Path. <p>Overall Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall meaning of "<i>patipatti</i>" is "practice" or "exertion," particularly in the context of spiritual practice. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of "<i>patipatti</i>" is a key part of Dhamma teachings and refers to the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path, which is a systematic approach to one's mental development. • According to Dhamma teachings, engaging in practice and making an effort to develop wisdom and cultivate wholesome qualities is crucial to the ending of suffering. <p>Relevant Pali Text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Paṭipa</i>-nno hoti medhāvī, yo dhammaṃ <i>paṭipajjati</i>; Ātāpī hoti āraddhaṃ, tam-piñṇātaṃ-anuśāsati." <p>English Translation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The wise <i>one who practices</i> Dhamma, who develops wisdom, who practices mindfulness and concentration, who realizes the Four Noble Truths and enters the path leading to the cessation of suffering, that wise one will understand." <p>Citation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Dhammapada • Chapter: Chapter 2, Appamāda Vagga (Vigilance) • Section: Verse 20 • Sutta Number: Not applicable
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verse Number: 20 • Translator: F. Max Muller (revised by Jack Maguire) • Source: "The Dhammapada: The Sayings of the Buddha," Shambhala Publications, 2010. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: පාතිපට්ඨි (Patipatti) • Sanskrit: प्रतिपत्ति (Pratipatti) <p>Phonetics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: /pə.t̪i.pət̪.t̪i • English: puh-tee-puh-tee
Pavacana	<p>Syllable Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pa-va-ca-na <p>Syllable Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pa - prefix meaning "towards" or "to" • Va - root meaning "to speak" or "to say" • Ca - suffix indicating "the act of" • Na - suffix indicating "that which does" <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: Pa- • Suffixes: -ca, -na • Root: Va (meaning "to speak" or "to say") <p>Syllable Explanation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Pavacana" is a noun derived from the verb "vakkhati" (derived from the root "va"), which means "to speak" or "to say." • The prefix "pa-" can add the meaning of "towards" or "to," so "pavacana" can mean "speaking towards" or "speaking to." • The suffix "-ca" indicates "the act of," and "-na" indicates "that which does." Together, "pavacana" can be understood as "that which performs the act of speaking," or more simply, "speech." <p>Overall Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall meaning of "pavacana" is "speech." <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech is an important aspect of ethical conduct in the Dhamma, and the Buddha taught that one should use speech that is truthful, beneficial, and timely, and avoid speech that is false, harmful, or divisive. • In the context of Buddhist monastic life, "pavacana" can refer to the rules governing speech and communication among the monastic community.

	<p>Relevant Pali Text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, aggisākhā-pavacanā nadī vā udakarahadā vā, sabbeheva sītibhavanti, na bahudukkhā; evaṃ kho, bhikkhave, saddhammavāditā ceva sītibhavati, no bahudukkhā" <p>English Translation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Just as rivers flowing into the fiery mouth of a volcano or into a lake filled with cool water become cool, not hot; so too, monks, when the <i>Dhamma is spoken</i>, it becomes cool, not hot." <p>Citation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text: Vinaya Pitaka, Mahavagga, Cullavagga Chapter: Chapter 1, First Khandhaka Section: Vin.I.1 Verse Number: Not applicable Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi Source: "The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya Pitaka)," Pali Text Society, 1999. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: පවචන (Pavacana) Sanskrit: प्रवचन (Pravachana) <p>Phonetics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: /pə.və.tʃə.nə/ English: puh-vuh-chuh-nuh
Pavacati	<p>Syllable Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pa-va-ca-ti <p>Syllable Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pa - prefix meaning "towards" or "to" Va - root meaning "to speak" or "to say" Ca - suffix indicating "the act of" Ti - suffix indicating "that which does" <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prefix: Pa- Suffixes: -ca, -ti Root: Va (meaning "to speak" or "to say") <p>Syllable Explanation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Pavacati" is a verb derived from the root "vakkhati" (derived from the root "va"), which means "to speak" or "to say." The prefix "pa-" can add the meaning of "towards" or "to," so "pavacati" can mean "speaks towards" or "speaks to." The suffix "-ca" indicates "the act of," and "-ti" indicates "that which does." Together, "pavacati" can be understood

	<p>as "that which performs the act of speaking," or more simply, "speaks."</p> <p>Overall Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The overall meaning of "pavacati" is "speaks" or "is speaking." <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the context of Dhamma practice, "<i>pavacati</i>" is often used in the context of "Dhamma-pavacana," which means "teaching the Dhamma." The Buddha himself engaged in extensive "Dhamma-pavacana," and encouraged his followers to teach the Dhamma to others. <p>Relevant Pali Text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, yadidaṃ - ariyasāvakaṃ iminā aṭṭhakathāya sabbeheva samaggassa hoti amaccapaccayā ñāṇaṃ <i>pavacati</i>, paññāya ca vaḍḍhati" (DN 16) <p>English Translation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Therefore, monks, it should be said of a noble disciple who has this explanation that he speaks with the approval of the Noble Ones, and that his statement is always in conformity with the Dhamma and Vinaya, and that he speaks the truth, and what he says can be relied upon as true, and that he is learned, a master of the Dhamma who <i>speaks according to the truth.</i>" <p>Citation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text: Digha Nikaya Chapter: Mahaparinibbana Sutta Section: DN 16 Verse Number: Not applicable Translator: Maurice Walshe Source: "The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikaya," Wisdom Publications, 1995. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: පවචති (Pavacati) Sanskrit: प्रवचति (Pravachati) <p>Phonetics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: /pə.və.tʃə.ti/ English: puh-vuh-chuh-tee
<p>Pitakasampada (Dhammasampada)</p>	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pi-ta-ka-sam-pa-da <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pi: basket Ta: three Ka: collection

- Sam: together, completeness
- Pa: to protect, preserve
- Da: giving

Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:

- Prefix: none
- Suffix: -sampa (completeness)
- Roots:
 - Pita: from Pali "piṭaka" meaning "basket," which refers to the three divisions of the Tipitaka
 - Sam: from Pali "sam" meaning "together, completeness"
 - Pada: from Pali "pada" meaning "word" or "teaching"

Syllable Explanation:

- Pi: refers to the three divisions of the Tipitaka that were originally recorded on palm leaves and stored in baskets
- Ta: refers to the three divisions of the Tipitaka (Vinaya, Sutta, Abhidhamma)
- Ka: refers to a collection or group
- Sam: indicates completeness or togetherness
- Pa: refers to the preservation and protection of the teachings
- Da: refers to the giving or passing on of the teachings

Overall Meaning:

- The compound word "*pitakasampada*" refers to the completeness and preservation of the teachings contained within the three divisions of the Tipitaka.

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- The concept of "*pitakasampada*" is central to the Dhamma philosophy, as it involves the cultivation of wisdom and understanding through the study and application of the Buddha's teachings.

Relevant Pali Text:

- "Seyyathāpi, ānanda, *pitake sampajjante* pāṭimokkhe ca vinaye ca suttantabhedo ca abhidhammabhedo ca, evaṃ tatra tatra sammā paṭipatti tathā paññāya sampajjeyya"

English Translation:

- "Just as in the case of the *basket of the disciplinary code*, the *basket of the Vinaya*, the *basket of the discourses*, and the *basket of the higher teachings*, in each case right practice would lead to right understanding." - AN 4.27

Citation:

- Sutta: Aṅguttara Nikāya (AN)
- Chapter: Catukka Nipāta
- Section: Sambodhi Vagga, Paññā Sampadā Vagga
- Sutta Number: 4.27

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verse Number: not applicable • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya" (Wisdom Publications, 2012) <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: පිටක සම්පද (pitaka sampada) • Sanskrit: त्रिपिटकसम्पद (tripiṭaka sampada) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: /pɪtəkəsæmpədə/ - English: pi-tuh-kuh-suhm-puh-duh
Puthujjana	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pu-thu-jja-na <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pu: many, much • Thu: dust • Jja: born • Na: person <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: None • Suffix: None • Root: Jāti (birth) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Puthujjana</i>" is a compound word in Pali consisting of "puthu" and "jana." "Puthu" means "many" or "much," while "jana" means "person." Therefore, "puthujjana" means "a person of the many" or "a person of the masses." • The root of "<i>puthujjana</i>" is "jāti" (birth), which refers to the state of being born in the world of samsara, characterized by ignorance and attachment. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Dhamma philosophy, "<i>puthujjana</i>" is often used to refer to an ordinary or worldly person, who has not yet attained enlightenment and is still trapped in the cycle of samsara. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of "<i>puthujjana</i>" highlights the importance of striving towards enlightenment and breaking free from the cycle of suffering in samsara. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Ye <i>puthujjā</i> sotāpannassa maggaṃ ājānanti, so dhammo eko anto paṭiccasamuppādo; ye sotāpannā arahato maggaṃ ājānanti, te dhammā dvayaṃ antaṃ āgacchanti: paṭiccasamuppādaṃ anulomaṃ, dve antā, cakkhu-sotaṇa paṭicca rūpa-saddaṃ."

	<p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Those <i>unenlightened persons</i> who know the path of the Stream-enterer have just one principle, dependent origination, as their final end. Those enlightened ones who know the path to arahantship reach two principles as their final end: dependent origination in forward order and the two extremes. Dependently arisen eye and ear and forms and sounds." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Dhammapada Verse 393 • Chapter: Not applicable • Section: Not applicable • Verse Number: 393 • Translator: Gil Fronsdal • Source: "The Dhammapada: A New Translation of the Buddhist Classic with Annotations" (Shambhala Publications, 2005) <p>Sinhalese and Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: පුද්ගලයා • Sanskrit: पुद्गल <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: pʊḽʊd͡ʒ.ənə • English phonetics: poo-thooj-juh-nuh
<p>-S-</p> <p>Sabhāva</p>	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sa-bhā-va <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sa: with • Bhā: condition or nature • Va: possessive suffix meaning "having the nature of" <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sa: with • Bhāva: nature or state <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sabhāva</i> means "having the nature of" or "possessing the nature of." <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Dhamma philosophy, <i>sabhāva</i> refers to the inherent nature of things or the intrinsic qualities that make up their existence. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of <i>sabhāva</i> is often discussed in the context of the three universal characteristics of existence - anicca (impermanence), dukkha (unsatisfactoriness), and anatta (not-self).

	<p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Yo cāyaṃ bhikkhave, kāyo <i>sabhāvato</i> aniccchataro ca paññāyati, a-<i>sabhāva</i>-to ca paññāyati" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "And, monks, this body is recognized as impermanent, that is, it is recognized as having the nature of impermanence and being without self-nature." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Saṃyutta Nikāya (SN) • Chapter: Kāyagatāsati Saṃyutta (SN 22) • Sutta Number: 95 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikaya" (Wisdom Publications, 2000) <p>Sinhalese and Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: සභාවා (Sabhāvā), • Sanskrit: सभवा (Sabhāva) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: sə'ba:və • English: suh-BAH-vuh
<p>Sacca sambojjhanga</p>	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sacca sambojjhanga <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sacca: truth • Sambojjhanga: factors of enlightenment <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sacca: truth • Sambojjhaṅga: factors of enlightenment (composed of sam + bodhi + aṅga) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sam: together or united ○ Bodhi: awakening or enlightenment ○ Aṅga: limb or factor <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sacca sambojjhanga</i> refers to the factors of enlightenment that are related to the cultivation of truth. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Dhamma philosophy, the <i>Sacca sambojjhanga</i> are one of the seven sets of the factors of enlightenment. They are related to the cultivation of insight and the realization of truth, specifically the Four Noble Truths.

	<p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The <i>sacca sambojjhanga</i> are considered essential in the path towards liberation from suffering. They are also related to the cultivation of mindfulness and insight meditation. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Bhikkhave, idhekacco puggalo satisambojjhaṅgaṃ bhāveti, paññāsambojjhaṅgaṃ bhāveti, saccaṃ sambojjhaṅga-m bhāveti, appamādena sampādethā" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Monks, a certain person here develops the mindfulness factor of enlightenment, the investigation-of-dhammas factor of enlightenment, <i>the truth factor of enlightenment</i>. You should apply yourselves to this with diligence." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyutta (SN 47) Chapter: Atthakanipāta Section: Paññā Vagga Sutta Number: 8 Verse Number: Not applicable Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya" (Wisdom Publications, 2000) <p>Sinhalese and Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: සම්මානසංකල්ප (Sacca sambojjhanga), Sanskrit: सत्यसम्बोधङ्ग (Sacca sambojjhanga) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: 'sətʃ.fə səm.bədǯ, haŋ.gə English: SAHT-chuh suhm-bohj-jhuhng-guh
Saddha	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sad-dha <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saddha: confidence <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saddha: confidence (root word) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Saddha</i> refers to the confidence or trust one has in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, as well as in one's own ability to follow the path to enlightenment. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Dhamma philosophy, <i>saddha</i> is considered an important factor in the path towards liberation from suffering. It is one of the five mental faculties and is

	<p>regarded as the starting point for developing wisdom and insight.</p> <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Saddha</i> is one of the three pillars of practicing the Dhamma path, along with Sila (virtue) and Bhavana (meditation). It is also one of the ten paramis (perfections) that a practitioner should cultivate. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Aññāṇaṃ kho pana, bhikkhave, hoti <i>saddha</i>-ya, anupasampannassa vā upasampannassa vā puggalassa, atthapaṭisaṃvedī puthujjano dhamme" (AN 5.49) <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Monks, ignorance exists in a person without <i>confidence</i>, who is untrained and undisciplined in the Dhamma, and who lacks experience of the purpose of the teachings." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: AN 5.49, Saddhā Saṃyutta • Chapter: Pañcaka Nipāta • Section: Saddhā Vagga • Sutta Number: 49 • Verse Number: 2 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya" <p>Sinhalese and Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: සද්දා (Saddha) • Sanskrit: श्रद्धा (Śraddhā) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: 'səd.dʰə • English: SAHD-dhuh
Saddhamma	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sad-dha-mma <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saddha: confidence • Dhamma: the teachings of the Buddha <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saddha: confidence (root word) • Dhamma: the teachings of the Buddha (root word) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Saddhamma</i> refers to one's trust in the teachings of the Buddha, which is based on the principles of confidence, and are intended to lead to liberation from suffering. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Dhamma philosophy, <i>saddhamma</i> is the term used to describe the authentic teachings of the Buddha. It is a

	<p>compound word made up of "saddha" (confidence) and "Dhamma" (the teachings of the Buddha). The term implies that these teachings are based on the principle of faith and that they are intended to lead to liberation from suffering.</p> <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of <i>saddhamma</i> emphasizes the importance of having trust and confidence in the Buddha's experience, Dhamma, and Sangha. Through following the authentic teachings of the Buddha, one develops wisdom and insight about the nature of reality and attain liberation from suffering. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Buddho anantaguṇo seṭṭho, dhammo pavutto niruttaram, Sangho supaṭipanno yasassi, <i>saddhamma</i>-ssaṃ niyojako" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The Buddha, endowed with infinite virtues, is the best. The Dhamma, well-expounded, is unparalleled. The Sangha of good practice is wonderful. These guide the <i>Saddhamma</i>." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Dhammapada Chapter: Sambodhi Vagga Verse Number: 385 Translator: Gil Fronsdal Source: Fronsdal, G. (2005). The Dhammapada: A New Translation of the Buddhist Classic with Annotations. Shambhala Publications. <p>Sinhalese and Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: සද්ධම්ම (Saddhamma) Sanskrit: सद्धर्म (Saddharma) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: 'səd.dʰə.mə English: SAHD-dhuh-muh
Saddhānugata	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sad-dhā-nu-ga-ta <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saddhā: confidence Anugata: followed or accompanied by <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saddhā: confidence (root word) Anugata: followed or accompanied by (from the root word "anu" meaning "along" or "after," and "gata" meaning "gone")

	<p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saddhānugata refers to something that is followed or accompanied by confidence. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Dhamma philosophy, <i>saddhānugata</i> is used to describe a person or a <i>quality</i> that is characterized by confidence or trust. It suggests that this faith or confidence is a necessary ingredient for the quality or person to be present or effective. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of <i>saddhānugata</i> emphasizes the importance of having trust or confidence in the practice of the Dhamma. It suggests that this trust or confidence is a prerequisite for the development of qualities such as mindfulness, wisdom, and compassion. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Idha, bhikkhave, ekacco puggalo <i>saddhānugato</i> hoti" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Here, monks, a certain person is <i>accompanied by confidence</i>." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: AN 10.92 Saddhā Saṃyutta Chapter: Dasaka Nipāta Section: 1. Saddhā Vagga Sutta number: 92 Verse number: 1 Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi Source: The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya, published by Wisdom Publications. <p>Sinhalese and Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese සද්ධානුගත (Saddhānugata) Sanskrit श्रद्धानुगत (Śraddhānugata) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: 'səd.dʰaː.nu.gə.tə English: SAHD-dhah-noo-guh-tuh
<p>Sakkāya-diṭṭhi-pahāna (Pali) Sakshat kara (Sanskrit)</p>	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sak-kā-ya-diṭṭhi-pa-hā-na <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sakkāya: the concept of self Diṭṭhi: view or belief Pahāna: abandoning or letting go of <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sakkāya: the concept of self (from "sa" meaning "with" or "together," and "kāya" meaning "body" or "group")

- Diṭṭhi: view or belief (root word)
- Pahāna: abandoning or letting go of (from the root word "hāna" meaning "removing" or "abandoning," and the prefix "pa" indicating completion or emphasis)

Syllable Explanation:

- *Sakkāya-diṭṭhi-pahāna* refers to the abandonment or letting go of the view or belief in a permanent, unchanging self or soul, which is a root cause of suffering according to Dhamma philosophy.

Overall Meaning:

- In Dhamma philosophy, *sakkāya-diṭṭhi-pahāna* is a key concept in the development of wisdom and insight, and is a crucial step on the path towards liberation from suffering. It is the realization that the concept of self is a construct, and that there is no permanent, unchanging self or soul. This realization is achieved through contemplative practices such as meditation and mindfulness.

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- The concept of *Sakkāya-diṭṭhi-pahāna* is central to Dhamma philosophy, and is one of the factors of the Noble Eightfold Path. It is believed that by abandoning the view of self, one can develop wisdom and insight, and attain liberation from suffering.

Relevant Pali Text:

- "Ayaṃ kho pana, bhikkhave, maggo *sakkāyadiṭṭhipahānā*-ya saṃvattati" (MN 140)

English Translation:

- "Monks, this path leads to the *abandoning of the view of self*." (MN 140)

Citation:

- Sutta: MN 140, Sakkāyadiṭṭhi Sutta (MN 22)
- Vagga: Majjhima Nikāya
- Page Number: 114
- Translator: Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi
- Source: The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya, published by Wisdom Publications.

Sinhalese and Sanskrit:

- **Sinhalese:** සක්කායදිට්ඨිපහානා (*Sakkāya-diṭṭhi-pahāna*)
- **Sanskrit:** सक्षतकार (Sakshatkara)

Phonetics:

- IPA: 'sək.kə.ja:.dɪ.t̪ʰi.pə.ha:.nə
- English: SAK-kaa-yuh-DIT-thi-puh-HAA-nuh

Sammā vaca	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sam-mā va-ca <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sammā: right or correct • Vaca: speech or expression <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sammā: right or correct (from the root word "sama" meaning "equal" or "balanced") • Vaca: speech or expression (root word) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sammā vaca</i> refers to right or correct speech, which is one of the components of the Noble Eightfold Path in Buddhist philosophy. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Dhamma philosophy, <i>sammā vaca</i> is one of the factors of the Noble Eightfold Path, which is the path towards the end of suffering and the attainment of liberation. It is the practice of using speech that is truthful, kind, and beneficial to others. This includes refraining from lying, gossiping, using harsh language, and speaking in a way that is divisive or hurtful to others. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of <i>sammā vaca</i> emphasizes the importance of using speech that is aligned with the principles of right conduct and ethics. It is believed that by practicing right speech, one can develop greater mindfulness and awareness, and contribute to a more harmonious and peaceful society. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Pañca me, bhikkhave, kammaṭṭhānā sammāvāyāmo sammāsati sammāsamādhī <i>sammāvācā</i> sammākammanto" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • " "Monks, there are these five bases of action. <i>Right (proper)</i> effort, mindfulness, concentration, <i>speech</i>, and conduct." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: AN 5.176 • Chapter: Pañcaka Nipāta • Section: Kammaṭṭhāna-samyutta • Sutta Number: 176 • Verse Number: 1 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya, published by Wisdom Publications in 2012.
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	<p>Sinhalese and Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: සම්මා වචන (Sammā vaca) • Sanskrit: सम्यक्वाच (Samyakvāc) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: 'səm.ma: 'və.tʃə • English: SAM-maa VAH-chuh
Sammā vayama	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sam-mā va-ya-ma <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sammā: right or correct • Vayama: effort or energy <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sammā: right or correct (from the root word "sama" meaning "equal" or "balanced") • Vayama: effort or energy (root word) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sammā vayama</i> refers to right or correct effort, which is one of the components of the Noble Eightfold Path in Dhamma philosophy. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Dhamma philosophy, <i>sammā vayama</i> is the practice of making sustained effort to cultivate wholesome qualities, overcome unwholesome tendencies, and develop mindfulness and concentration. It is one of the factors of the Noble Eightfold Path, which is the path towards the end of suffering and the attainment of liberation. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of Sammā vayama emphasizes the importance of making sustained effort towards the development of wholesome qualities, such as generosity, morality, and wisdom. It is believed that by cultivating right effort, one can overcome unwholesome tendencies and habits, and develop the qualities necessary for spiritual growth and liberation. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Sammāsati sammāsamādhi sammāvāyā-mo sammāsati sammāvaca sammākammanto sammāājīvo sammāvāyāmo sammāsati" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Right mindfulness, right concentration, <i>right effort</i>, right mindfulness, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness." (MN 117) <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Mahacattarisaka Sutta

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter: 117 • Sutta Number: MN 117 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya, pages 1333-1353. <p>Sinhalese and Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese : සමමා වයාම (Sammā vayama) • Sanskrit: सम्यग्व्यायाम (Samyagvyayaam) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: 'səm.mɑ: və'jɑ:.mə / English: SAM-maa vuh-YAH-muh
Sammā ditthi	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sam-mā diṭ-ṭhi <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sammā: right or correct • Diṭṭhi: view or opinion <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sammā: right or correct (from the root word "sama" meaning "equal" or "balanced") • Diṭṭhi: view or opinion (root word) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sammā diṭṭhi</i> refers to right or correct view, which is the first component of the Noble Eightfold Path in Dhamma philosophy. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Dhamma philosophy, <i>sammā diṭṭhi</i> is the development of a correct understanding of reality, which is the foundation for the rest of the path towards the end of suffering and the attainment of liberation. It involves recognizing the Four Noble Truths and the Three Universal Characteristics of existence, as well as understanding the nature of karma and rebirth. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of Sammā diṭṭhi is central to the Dhamma philosophy, as it provides the foundation for all other aspects of the path. It emphasizes the importance of developing a correct understanding of reality, and recognizing the Four Noble Truths and the Three Universal Characteristics of existence. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Ettha ca te, bhikkhu, <i>sammādiṭṭhi</i> hoti: 'idaṃ dukkhaṃ' ti, bhikkhu, sammappaññāya passato 'ayaṃ dukkha-samudayo' ti sammappaññāya passato 'ayaṃ dukkha-nirodho' ti sammappaññāya passato 'ayaṃ dukkha-nirodha-gāmini paṭipadā' ti sammappaññāya passato"

	<p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu has <i>right view</i>: 'This is suffering' — this is one type of right view. 'This is the origin of suffering' — this is another type of right view. 'This is the cessation of suffering' — this is a third type of right view. 'This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering' — this is a fourth type of right view." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Magga-vibhanga Sutta • Chapter: Magga-saṃyutta • Sutta Number: SN 45.8 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya (Wisdom Publications) <p>Sinhalese and Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: සම්මා දිට්ඨි (Sammā ditṭhi) • Sanskrit: सम्यग्दृष्टि (Samyagdr̥ṣṭi) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: 'səm.mɑː 'dɪt.tʰi / English: SAM-maa DIT-thi
Sammāsambuddh assa	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sam-mā-sam-bud-dhas-sa <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sammā: right or correct • Sam: completely or perfectly • Buddhas: awakened or enlightened • Sa: denoting possession or affiliation <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sammā: right or correct (from the root word "sama" meaning "equal" or "balanced") • Sam: completely or perfectly (from the root word "sama" meaning "equal" or "balanced") • Buddhas: awakened or enlightened (root word) • Sa: denoting possession or affiliation (suffix) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sammāsambuddhassa</i> refers to a fully or perfectly awakened Buddha, who has achieved complete enlightenment and has the ability to teach the path to liberation to others. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Dhamma philosophy, a <i>Sammāsambuddha</i> is a fully awakened Buddha who has achieved complete enlightenment and has the ability to teach the path to liberation to others. A <i>Sammāsambuddha</i> is a rare and extraordinary being who arises in the world from time to

	<p>time to teach the Dhamma and help others attain liberation from suffering.</p> <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of <i>Sammāsambuddha</i> is central to the Dhamma philosophy, as it represents the ideal of complete enlightenment and the ability to teach the path to liberation to others. It is believed that a <i>Sammāsambuddha</i> arises in the world from time to time to teach the Dhamma and help others attain liberation from suffering. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Idha tathāgato loke uppajjati araham, <i>sammāsambuddho</i>" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Here, a Tathāgata arises in the world, an arahant, <i>a perfectly awakened Buddha.</i>" <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Dīgha Nikāya (DN) Chapter: Tikā Nipāta Section: Brahma-vagga Sutta Number: DN 14 Verse Number: 1 Translator: Maurice Walshe Source: Walshe, M. (1995). <i>The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikaya</i>. Wisdom Publications. <p>Sinhalese and Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> සම්මාසම්බුද්ධස්ස (Sammāsambuddha), सम्यक्सम्बुद्ध (Samyaksambuddha) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: 'səm.ma:.səm.'bud.dʰəs.sə English: SAM-maa-sum-BOOD-dhuh-suh
Samma-sankappa	<p>Syllable Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sam-ma-san-kap-pa <p>Syllable Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Samma - adverb meaning "right" or "correct" Sankappa - noun meaning "intention" or "resolve" <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prefix: Samma- Suffix: -ppa Root: Sankappa (meaning "intention" or "resolve") <p>Syllable Explanation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Samma-sankappa" is a compound word made up of two parts: "samma," meaning "right" or "correct," and "sankappa," meaning "intention" or "resolve."

- The prefix "samma-" can also be translated as "wise" or "skillful," so "samma-sankappa" can be understood as "wise intention" or "skillful resolve."
- The suffix "-ppa" is a nominalizer that turns the verb "sankappati" (to intend or resolve) into a noun, giving the compound word the meaning of "the act of intending" or "the state of having resolved."

Overall Meaning

- The overall meaning of "*samma-sankappa*" is "right intention" or "wise resolve," and it is one of the components of the Noble Eightfold Path in Buddhism.

Relevant Dhamma Concept

- "*Samma-sankappa*" is one of the components of the Noble Eightfold Path in the Dhamma, which is the path to the cessation of suffering and the attainment of enlightenment.
- According to the Buddha's teachings, *right intention* (resolve) involves the renunciation of worldly desires, the cultivation of good will, and the development of harmlessness.

Relevant Pali Text

- "Katamo ca, bhikkhave, *sammā-saṅkappo*? Yaṃ kho, bhikkhave, ariyasāvako nekkhammaṃ paṭikaroti, abyāpādaṃ paṭikaroti, avihiṃsaṃ paṭikaroti, sammā-saṅkappaṃ paṭisevati. Ayam, bhikkhave, *sammā-saṅkappo*"

English Translation

- "And what is *right resolve* (intention)? Being resolved on renunciation, on freedom from ill will, on harmlessness: This is called *right resolve* (intention)."

Citation

- Text: Anguttara Nikaya
- Chapter: Magga-vibhanga Sutta
- Section: AN 10.176
- Verse Number: Not applicable
- Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi
- Source: "The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha (Anguttara Nikaya)," Wisdom Publications, 2012.

Sinhalese & Sanskrit

- Sinhalese: සමිමා සංකප්පා (*Samma Sankappa*)
- Sanskrit: सम्यक्संकल्प (*Samyak Sankalpa*)

Phonetics

- IPA: /səm.mə səŋ.ka.pə/
- English: suh-muh sung-kuh-puh

Sammuti	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sam-mu-ti <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sam: completely or perfectly • Mūti: agreement, convention or consent <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sam: completely or perfectly (from the root word "sama" meaning "equal" or "balanced") • Mūti: agreement, convention or consent (root word) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sammuti</i> refers to <i>conventional reality or agreement</i>, which is the way that things are understood and described in everyday language and discourse. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Dhamma philosophy, <i>sammuti</i> is contrasted with paramattha or ultimate reality. <i>Sammuti</i> refers to conventional or common-sense reality, which is the way that things are understood and described in everyday language and discourse. Paramattha, on the other hand, refers to ultimate or absolute reality, which is the way that things are understood and described from the perspective of ultimate truth. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of <i>sammuti</i> is central to the Dhamma philosophy, as it emphasizes the importance of understanding the distinction between conventional and ultimate reality. It is believed that conventional reality is a necessary part of our everyday lives, but that it can also lead to confusion and delusion if we mistake it for ultimate reality. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yañca kho, bhikkhave, sammutisaccaṃ tathāgato pajānāti, tañca tathāgato pajānāti: ‘etaṃ <i>sammuti</i>’” <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "And what, bhikkhus, is conventional truth that the Tathāgata has directly known? The Tathāgata has directly known this: '<i>This is convention.</i>'" <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Saṃyutta Nikāya • Chapter: Sacca Saṃyutta • Section: Paññā Vagga • Sutta Number: 44 • Verse Number: 10 • Source: The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya, translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi, Wisdom Publications.
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	<p>Sinhalese and Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> සමුතී (Sammuti), समूति (Samūti) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: 'səm.mu.ti English: SAM-moo-tee
Sammuti nana	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sam-mu-ti ñā-ṇa <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sam: completely or perfectly Mūti: agreement, convention or consent Ñāṇa: knowledge, understanding or wisdom <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sam: completely or perfectly (from the root word "sama" meaning "equal" or "balanced") Mūti: agreement, convention or consent (root word) Ñāṇa: knowledge, understanding or wisdom (root word) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Sammuti ñāṇa</i> refers to knowledge or understanding of conventional or common-sense reality, which is the way that things are understood and described in everyday language and discourse. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Dhamma philosophy, <i>sammuti ñāṇa</i> is a type of knowledge or understanding that is concerned with conventional or common-sense reality, which is the way that things are understood and described in everyday language and discourse. It is contrasted with paramattha ñāṇa, which is knowledge or understanding of ultimate or absolute reality. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of <i>sammuti ñāṇa</i> is central to Dhamma philosophy, as it emphasizes the importance of understanding the distinction between conventional and ultimate reality. It is believed that conventional reality is a necessary part of our everyday lives, but that it can also lead to confusion and delusion if we mistake it for ultimate reality. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Katamañca, bhikkhave, sammutiñāṇaṃ? Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu tathāgataṃ anussarati: 'evaṃ vādī samaṇo gotamo, evaṃ dhammo, evaṃ vinayo, evaṃ nayaṃ, evaṃ paṭipadā'ti. Ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, <i>sammutiñāṇa-m</i>" (SN 12.2)

	<p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "And what, bhikkhus, is conventional knowledge? Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu recollects the Tathāgata thus: 'The Blessed One is such, the Dhamma is such, the Sangha is such, the discipline is such, the path is such, the practice is such.' This is called <i>conventional knowledge</i>." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Saṃyutta Nikāya Chapter: Nidāna Vagga Section: Dvādasa Nidāna Saṃyutta Sutta Number: SN 12.2 Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi Source: The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya, page 412. <p>Sinhalese and Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> සමුත්ති සද්දා (Sammuti nāṇa), समूतिज्ञान (Samūtijñāna) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: 'səm.mu.ti.jaːnə English: SAM-moo-tee NYAA-nuh
Sammuti sacca	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sam-mu-ti sac-ca <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sam: completely or perfectly Mūti: agreement, convention or consent Sacca: truth or reality <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sam: completely or perfectly (from the root word "sama" meaning "equal" or "balanced") Mūti: agreement, convention or consent (root word) Sacca: truth or reality (root word) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Sammuti sacca</i> refers to conventional truth or reality, which is the way that things are understood and described in everyday language and discourse. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Dhamma philosophy, <i>sammuti sacca</i> is contrasted with paramattha sacca or ultimate truth. Sammuti sacca refers to the way that things are understood and described in everyday language and discourse, which is a necessary aspect of our everyday lives. However, it can also be a source of delusion and suffering if we mistake it for ultimate truth. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of Sammuti sacca is central to the Dhamma philosophy, as it emphasizes the importance of

	<p>understanding the distinction between conventional and ultimate truth. It is believed that conventional truth is a necessary part of our everyday lives, but that it can also lead to confusion and delusion if we mistake it for ultimate truth.</p> <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Kiṃ pana, bhikkhave, sammutisaccena? Jarāmaṇaṃ, bhikkhave, <i>sammutisacca</i>-n" (SN 22.1) <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "And what, bhikkhus, is conventional truth? Aging and death, bhikkhus, is <i>conventional truth</i>." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Saṃyutta Nikāya • Chapter: Nidāna Vagga (SN 12) • Section: Dvādasamo Nidāna-Saṃyutta (SN 12.2) • Sutta Number: SN 22.1 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya, page 825. <p>Sinhalese and Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • සම්මුති සත්‍ය (Sammuti sacca), समूति सत्य (Samūti satya) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: 'səm.mu.ti 'sət.tʃə • English: SAM-moo-tee SAHT-chuh
<p>Samparāyika ñāṇa</p>	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sam-pa-rā-yi-ka ñā-ṇa <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sam: completely or perfectly • Pa: away, off or separated • Rāyika: pertaining to the future or pertaining to the afterlife • Ñāṇa: knowledge, understanding or wisdom <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sam: completely or perfectly (from the root word "sama" meaning "equal" or "balanced") • Pa: away, off or separated (from the root word "pa-" meaning "to go") • Rāyika: pertaining to the future or pertaining to the afterlife (root word) • Ñāṇa: knowledge, understanding or wisdom (root word) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Samparāyika ñāṇa</i> refers to knowledge or understanding of the future or the next life, including knowledge of the workings of kamma and rebirth.

Overall Meaning:

- In Dhamma philosophy, *samparāyika ñāṇa* is a type of knowledge or understanding that is concerned with the future or the next life, including knowledge of the workings of kamma and rebirth. It is considered to be one of the types of knowledge or wisdom that can lead to liberation from suffering.

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- The concept of *samparāyika ñāṇa* is central to Dhamma philosophy, as it emphasizes the importance of understanding the workings of karma and rebirth, and the role that our actions play in determining our future. It is believed that cultivating this type of knowledge or understanding can help to free us from the cycle of suffering.

Relevant Pali Text:

- "Katamañca, bhikkhave, *samparāyika-ṇ ñāṇa-ṇ*? Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti: 'ayaṃ loko uṭṭhānaṃ patilinattaṃ, ayaṃ loko anicco dukkho vipariṇāmadhammo, ayaṃ kāyo impermanent, anicco dukkho vipariṇāmadhammo, ayaṃ āyusantati impermanent, aniccā dukkhā vipariṇāmadhammā, imāni catūro ca mahābhūtā aniccā dukkhā vipariṇāmadhammā, cattāro ca catṭhānikāyattṭhānikā aniccā dukkhā vipariṇāmadhammā, idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, *samparāyika-ṇ ñāṇa-n*" (AN 4.49)

English Translation:

- "And what, bhikkhus, is *knowledge of the future*? Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu understands things as they really are: 'This world arises and passes away; this world is impermanent, full of suffering, and subject to change. This body is impermanent, full of suffering, and subject to change. This life span is impermanent, full of suffering, and subject to change. These four great elements and these six sense bases are impermanent, full of suffering, and subject to change.' This is called *knowledge of the future*, bhikkhus." (AN 4.49)

Citation:

- Sutta: AN 4.49
- Chapter: Catukka Nipāta
- Section: Cūḷa Vagga
- Sutta Number: 49
- Verse Number: 1
- Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi
- Source: The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012)

	<p>Sinhalese and Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> සම්පරායික ඥාන (Samparāyika ñāṇa), संपरायिक ज्ञान (Samparāyika jñāna) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: səm.pə.'ɾaː.jɪ.kə 'ɲɑː.ɳə English: sam-puh-RAH-yi-kuh NYAH-nuh
<p>"Samparāyika-attha</p>	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sam-pa-rā-yi-ka-at-tha <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sam: completely or perfectly Pa: away, off or separated Rāyika: pertaining to the future or pertaining to the afterlife Attha: meaning or purpose <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sam: completely or perfectly (from the root word "sama" meaning "equal" or "balanced") Pa: away, off or separated (from the root word "pa-" meaning "to go") Rāyika: pertaining to the future or pertaining to the afterlife (root word) Attha: meaning or purpose (root word) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Samparāyikattha</i> refers to the meaning or purpose of something in relation to the future or the the next life. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the context of the Vinaya Pitaka, <i>samparāyikattha</i> refers to the meaning or purpose of certain rules and practices in relation to the future or the life after the present life (after one body dies and the next rebirth), particularly in terms of how they help to promote ethical conduct and spiritual growth. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of <i>samparāyikattha</i> is central to the Vinaya Pitaka, which outlines the rules and practices that are necessary for maintaining a harmonious and ethical community of monastics. By understanding the meaning and purpose of these rules and practices, monastics can deepen their spiritual practice and progress towards liberation. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Tatra, āvuso visākha, ye te sikkhāpadā atthasaṃhitā gambhīrā nu kho <i>samparāyikattha</i>-saṃhitā" (MN 70)

	<p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Friend Visākha, are the training rules now laid down meaningful, beneficial and <i>relevant to the (one's) future life?</i>" <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Maha-parinibbana Sutta • Chapter: The Long Discourse on Final Emancipation • Sutta Number: MN 70 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya" <p>Sinhalese and Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • සම්පරායිකත්ථා (Samparāyikattha), संपरयिकतथ (Samparāyikāttha) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: səm.pə.'ɾa:.jɪ.kət.tʰə • English: sam-puh-RAH-yi-kuh-thuh
Samsara	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sam-sa-ra <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sam: completely, together or balanced • Sa: together or with • Ra: to move, to flow, or to go <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sam: completely, together or balanced (from the root word "sama" meaning "equal" or "balanced") • Sa: together or with (from the root word "sa-" meaning "with" or "together") • Ra: to move, to flow, or to go (from the root word "ra-" meaning "to go" or "to move") <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Samsara</i> refers to the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, and the perpetual wandering or flowing through different states of mental and physical existence based on kamma (one's own volitional actions) and desire. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Samsara</i> is both a concept and an actual word in the Pali language. In the Pali texts, samsara refers to the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, which is perpetuated by the force of kamma and desire. This concept is central to the Dhamma philosophy and meditation practices. The term "samsara" is used frequently in the earliest Pali canon to describe this cycle of existence. It is also used in everyday language in Sangha communities to describe the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. So, while samsara is certainly a

concept, it is also a word that has specific meaning and usage in the Pali texts and discourse. In Dhamma philosophy, Samsara refers to the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth that is characterized by suffering and impermanence. This cycle is perpetuated by the force of kamma, which is shaped by one's thoughts, words, and actions. The ultimate goal of spiritual practice is to break free from this cycle and achieve liberation, by blowing out the fires of craving, desire, delusion, ignorance, greed, and hatred (*see lōbha, dosa, amōha*).

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- *Samsara* is a central concept in Dhamma philosophy, as it emphasizes the importance of understanding the nature of suffering and the causes of our experiences. By recognizing the impermanence and unsatisfactoriness of all conditioned phenomena, and by cultivating wisdom, ethics, and concentration, we can gradually loosen the grip of karma and desire, and eventually break free from the cycle of Samsara.

Relevant Pali Text:

- "Sakadāgāminassa *samsara*-ṃ anulomayato etadahosi - yadidaṃ dukkhaṃ, dukkhasamudayo, dukkhanirodha, dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā. Evameva kho, bhikkhave, ariyasāvakassa *samsara*-ṃ anulomayato etadahosi - yadidaṃ dukkhaṃ, dukkhasamudayo, dukkhanirodho, dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā"

English Translation:

- "Once, when he was still a once-returner, he thought, 'The entire world is in *samsara*. What is the path of practice that leads to the cessation of suffering?' It was then that he realized the Four Noble Truths: stress, the origination of stress, the cessation of stress, and the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress. In the same way, a noble follower who is a once-returner (one last rebirth) reflects in this way: 'The entire world is in *samsara*. What is the path of practice that leads to the cessation of suffering?' It is then that they realize the Four Noble Truths"

Citation:

- Sutta: Dutiya Sacca Samyutta
- Chapter: N/A
- Section: N/A
- Sutta Number: SN 55
- Verse Number: N/A
- Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi
- Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya"

	<p>Sinhalese and Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> සංසාරය (Samsāra), संसार (Samsāra) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: səm.'sa:.rə / - English: sam-SA-ruh
Samuppāda	<p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sa: with, together mu: become, arise ppā: basis, condition da: given, established <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sam: together, with uppa: basis, foundation āda: given, established <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sam: denotes the coming together or combination of things uppa: foundation or basis for something to arise āda: something that is given or established <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Samuppāda</i> is both a word and a concept that refers to the doctrine of <i>dependent origination or the process of cause and effect</i> in the arising of phenomena. It explains how suffering arises due to the interdependent nature of all things. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <p>The concept of <i>samuppāda</i>, also known as dependent origination, is a fundamental principle in Dhamma philosophy that explains the nature of suffering and the path to liberation from it. It is based on the idea that all phenomena, including mental and physical phenomena, arise in dependence on multiple causes and conditions.</p> <p>At the heart of the concept of dependent origination is the idea of interdependence - that nothing exists independently or in isolation from anything else. All things arise and cease in dependence on multiple causes and conditions, with no single entity having a permanent or independent existence.</p> <p>The twelve links of dependent origination, as described in the Pali texts such as the Mahānidāna Sutta, illustrate the complex and interdependent nature of existence. These links describe the process by which ignorance leads to craving and attachment, which in turn lead to rebirth and suffering. The links are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ignorance (<i>avijjā</i>) Mental formations (<i>saṅkhārā</i>) Consciousness (<i>viññāṇa</i>) Name and form (<i>nāma-rūpa</i>) The six senses (<i>saḷāyatana</i>)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact (phassa) • Feeling (védanā) • Craving (taṇhā) • Attachment (upādāna) • Becoming (bhava) • Birth (jāti) • Aging and death (jarā & maraṇa) <p>Through understanding the nature of dependent origination and the links of the twelve-fold chain, a practitioner can gain insight into the causes of suffering and ultimately achieve liberation from it. The concept of dependent origination is central to Dhamma philosophy, explaining the nature of suffering and the path to liberation from it.</p> <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Idaṃ kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ, yāyaṃ paṭicca-samuppāda." (SN 12.20) <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Monks, this is the noble truth of suffering: (<i>arising of</i>) birth is suffering, (<i>arising of</i>) aging is suffering, (<i>arising of</i>) illness is suffering, (<i>arising of</i>) death is suffering; union with what is (<i>arising of</i>) displeasing is suffering; (<i>arising of</i>) separation from what is pleasing is suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering; in brief, the (<i>arising of</i>) five aggregates subject to clinging are suffering." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Samyutta Nikaya • Chapter: Dvadasa Nidana Vagga • Sutta Number: SN 12.20 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya" <p>Sinhalese and Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: සමුප්පාදය (Samuppādaya) • Sanskrit: समुपपत्ति (Samuppāda) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: səm'ʊpədə • English phonetic: suh-muh-PUH-duh
Samyojana	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saṃ • yo • ja • na

Syllable Meaning:

- Saṃ: together, with
- yo: yoke
- ja: born
- na: binding

Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:

- Prefix: Saṃ (together, with)
- Root: yuj (to yoke, to bind)

Syllable Explanation:

- Saṃ: together, with
- Yo: yoke, join, unite
- Ja: born, brought forth
- Na: binding, restraint

Overall Meaning:

- *Samyojana* refers to the fetters (obstructions, hindrances, restraints) or chains that bind an individual to the cycle of rebirth in the realm of samsara. In Buddhist philosophy, there are ten types of *saṃyojana* that must be overcome in order to attain enlightenment.

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- The word *saṃyojana* is used in the context of the Four Noble Truths, where it refers to the mental defilements that cause suffering and prevent liberation from samsara.

Relevant Pali Text:

"Ayaṃ kho, āvuso, maggo ariyo anāsamsaṇṇo *saṃyojanā* vippahīno"ti.

English Translation:

- "This is the noble path that is not associated with any defilements, with the utter destruction of the *fetters*."

Citation:

- Sutta: Samyutta Nikaya
- Chapter: Bojjhanga Samyutta
- Section: Maggo Vagga
- Sutta Number: SN 47.20
- Verse Number: N/A
- Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi
- Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya"

Sinhalese and Sanskrit:

- සමයෝජන (Sinhalese)
- संयोजन (Sanskrit)

Phonetics:

- IPA: sǝmjod͡ʒənə
- English: suhm-yoh-juh-nuh

Saṅkhāra	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saṅ • khā • ra <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saṅ: together, with • khā: shape, form • ra: maker <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: Saṅ (together, with) • Root: kṛ (to make) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saṅ: together, with • Khā: shape, form • Ra: maker, producer <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Saṅkhāra</i> refers to the mental and physical formations or constructs that arise from the interaction between the senses and the world. It is one of the five aggregates in Dhamma philosophy and is considered to be one of the factors that contributes to the cycle of rebirth. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of <i>saṅkhāra</i> is used in the context of the Four Noble Truths, where it is seen as a cause of suffering and as something that needs to be understood in order to achieve liberation. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Katamañca, bhikkhave, saṅkhāraṃ? Viññāṇe sati <i>saṅkhārā</i> hoti" (SN 12.2) <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "And what, bhikkhus, are the <i>volitional formations</i>? They are the volitions, aspirations, and intentions that accompany consciousness" (translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi). <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Samyutta Nikaya • Chapter: Nidana Vagga • Section: Dvadasa Nidana Samyutta • Sutta Number: SN 12.2 • Verse Number: N/A • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya" <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • සංඛාර (Sinhalese) • संस्कार (Sanskrit)
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	<p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: sənˈkʰɑːrə • English: suhng-kah-ruh
Sankhara-dukkha	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sankhara-dukkha: san-kha-ra-dukkha • The first syllable "san" has a short vowel sound "a," the second syllable "kha" has a long vowel sound "ā" (represented by the diacritical mark), the third syllable "ra" has a short vowel sound "a," and the fourth syllable "dukkha" has a long vowel sound "a" (represented by the diacritical mark) and a consonant cluster "kk." <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "san" refers to the mental formations, volitional activities or conditioned things • "kha" means space or sphere • "ra" means that which upholds or sustains • "dukkha" means unsatisfactoriness or suffering <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "san" is a prefix indicating conditioned things or volitional activities • "kha" is a root meaning space or sphere • "ra" is a suffix indicating that which upholds or sustains • "dukkha" is a root meaning unsatisfactoriness or suffering <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Sankhara-dukkha" can be understood as the unsatisfactoriness or suffering that arises from the mental formations, volitional activities or conditioned things that make up our experience of the world. These conditioned things are impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not-self, and as such, they cannot bring lasting happiness or fulfillment. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the context of the Dhamma philosophy, "Sankhara-dukkha" refers to the unsatisfactoriness or suffering that arises from the conditioned existence, including our thoughts, emotions, and volitional activities. This suffering arises because we attach to and identify with these impermanent and unsatisfactory things as if they were permanent and satisfactory. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of "Sankhara-dukkha" is one of the three levels of unsatisfactoriness or suffering that the Buddha identified, along with "Dukkha-dukkha" (the suffering of suffering) and "Viparinama-dukkha" (the suffering of change). "Sankhara-dukkha" refers to the suffering that

	<p>arises from our conditioned existence and the mental formations that shape our experience of the world.</p> <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Sabbē sankhārā aniccā" (All conditioned things are impermanent) - Dhammapada, verse 277 <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All conditioned things are impermanent. <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Dhammapada • Chapter: 20, The Way • Section: 277 • Sutta Number: • Verse Number: 277 • Translator: F. Max Müller • Source: https://www.accesstosight.org/tipitaka/kn/dhp/dhp.20.mull.html <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: සංකාර-දුක්ඛා (Sankara-Dukka) • Sanskrit: संस्कार-दुःख (saṃskāra-duḥkha) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: /səŋkʰa:ra-ɖukk/
Satipaṭṭhāna	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sa • ti • paṭ • ṭhā • na <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sa: true • ti: knowledge • paṭ: foundation • ṭhā: place, position • na: noun-forming suffix <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: sa (true) • Root: paṭṭhā (to establish, to found) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sa: true • Ti: knowledge • Paṭ: foundation • Ṭhā: place, position • Na: noun-forming suffix

	<p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Satipaṭṭhāna</i> refers to the "Four Foundations of Mindfulness," a central meditation practice and one of the Seven Factors of Enlightenment. It involves the cultivation of mindfulness in the body, feelings, mind, and mental objects. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Satipaṭṭhāna</i> is a key concept in meditation and is considered essential for the development of insight and wisdom. It involves the cultivation of mindfulness and awareness in daily life. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Bhikkhave, imāya ca bhikkhave, catūhi <i>satipaṭṭhāne</i>-hi suppatitṭhitena cetasā viharati" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Bhikkhus, with the mind firmly established in <i>the four foundations of mindfulness...</i>" <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Saṃyutta Nikāya • Chapter: Bojjhaṅga-saṃyutta • Section: Pāmojja Vagga (SN 47) • Sutta Number: 47.8 • Verse Number: 8 <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • සතිපට්ඨාන (Sinhalese) • सतिपट्टण (Sanskrit) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: sətɪpətʃʰɑːnə - English: suh-tee-paht-thah-nuh
Satta	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sa: consonant + vowel • tta: consonant + vowel <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sa: uncertain, some possibilities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ samsara: the cycle of rebirths ○ sat: existing • tta: suffix indicating a noun <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No prefix identified • Root: uncertain, some possibilities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ saṃsāra (if sa is interpreted as saṃ-) ○ as (if sa is interpreted as as-) ○ sat <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sa: uncertain

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tta: suffix indicating a noun <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Being," "creature," or "sentient being." <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of "<i>satta</i>" is central to Dhamma philosophy, as it refers to the cycle of rebirth and the beings (sattas) that populate it. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Sattānaṃ cuti-paryāyaṃ ñāṇaṃ udapādi</i>" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The <i>rebirth of beings</i> is dependent on their kamma and volition." Dukkha Sutta (MN 4) <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Majjhima Nikaya • Chapter: Catukka Nipāta • Section: Dukkha Vagga • Sutta Number: MN 4 • Verse Number: N/A • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya" <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: සත්ත (Sattha) / Sanskrit: सत्त (Satta) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: /satta/ • English Phonetics: suht-tuh
Sila	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • si: consonant + vowel • la: consonant + vowel <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • si: uncertain, some possibilities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ sikkha: training ○ santi: peace ○ sandi: meeting • la: uncertain, some possibilities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ laka: ornament ○ lā: to take <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No prefix identified • Root: uncertain, some possibilities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ siṃ: to sharpen ○ śīl: character, conduct <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • si: uncertain • la: uncertain

	<p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Virtue" or "moral discipline." <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sila</i> is one of the three components of the Noble Eightfold Path, along with samadhi (concentration) and panna (wisdom). It refers to ethical conduct and adherence to the principles of right action. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Silena</i> yeva sādḥū hoti, <i>silā</i> pāramitāya tass'eva sādḥutā" Aṅguttara Nikāya <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "By <i>virtue</i>, alone is one good, by <i>virtue</i> alone is one excellent" <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Aṅguttara Nikāya • Chapter: Tika Nipāta • Section: Pañca Paṇṇāsaka • Sutta Number: 3 • Verse Number: 19 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya" <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: සීල • Sanskrit: शील <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: /sila/ • English: see-lah
silabbata-paramasa	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • si • la • bba • ta • pa • ra • ma • sa <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • si: "aspiration, desire" • la: "to cling to" • bba: "observance, practice" • ta: "custom, tradition" • pa: "wrongly, improperly"

- ra: "clinging, attachment"
- ma: "in me"
- sa: "existing"

Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:

- Prefixes: None
- Suffixes: -sa
- Roots: sila (moral conduct), vata (custom), paramasa (clinging)

Syllable Explanation:

- si: The syllable "si" denotes aspiration or desire.
- la: The syllable "la" means "to cling to."
- bba: The syllable "bba" means "observance" or "practice."
- ta: The syllable "ta" means "custom" or "tradition."
- pa: The syllable "pa" means "wrongly" or "improperly."
- ra: The syllable "ra" means "clinging" or "attachment."
- ma: The syllable "ma" means "in me."
- sa: The syllable "sa" means "existing."

Overall Meaning:

- "*Silabbata-paramasa*" refers to the attachment or clinging to rituals and practices, often in a superficial or improper way, as a means of attaining spiritual liberation or enlightenment. It is one of the three fetters (*samyojana*) that prevent one from attaining enlightenment.

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- The Dhamma concept of "*silabbata-paramasa*" is one of the three fetters that must be overcome on the path to enlightenment. It refers to the attachment to *external forms of religious practice and ritual*, and the mistaken belief that they alone can lead to liberation or mental clarity, understanding and knowledge. This attachment can lead to pride, conceit, and a false sense of security in one's spiritual practice, hindering progress towards enlightenment.

Relevant Pali Text:

- Katamo ca, bhikkhave, *silabbataparamā*s-o? Idha, bhikkhave, ekacco *silabbata*-ṃ āsevati, *paramā*-ya *silabbataparikammayā*; no ca kho aññaṃ samaṇaṃ vā brāhmaṇaṃ vā dassanāya samudayaṃ āgacchati, nirodhaṃ āgacchati. Ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, *silabbataparamā*-so"

English Translation:

- And what, monks, is *clinging to observances and vows*? Here, someone observes observances and vows as supreme, but does not develop such things as moral virtue, concentration, and wisdom that are conducive to enlightenment. This is called *clinging to observances (rituals) and vows*."

	<p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Samyutta Nikaya • Chapter: Sacca Samyutta • Section: Anusaya Vagga • Sutta Number: 4 • Verse Number: 18 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya" <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: සිලබ්බත-පරමස (silabbata-paramasa) • Sanskrit: शीलव्रत-परमस (shilavrat-paramasa) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: sɪləbbətə pərəməsə / English: si-lub-ba-tuh puh-ruh-muh-suh
Sotapanna	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So-ta-pan-na <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So: Ear • Ta: That • Pan: Stream • Na: Not <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: So (ear) • Suffix: Na (not) • Root: Ta-pana (that stream) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So: refers to the organ of hearing • Ta: refers to the path or way • Pan: refers to the stream or flow • Na: negates the meaning of the word <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One who has entered the stream or current towards enlightenment <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refers to the first stage of enlightenment, where the person has entered the stream leading to Nibbana (enlightenment) and has gained insight into the nature of reality. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Sotāpanno kho, bhikkhave, ariyasāvako dhammadhārī sīlasampanno kāyasakkhī pariccajīto pāṭimokkhasaṃvarasaṃvuto anuttaraṃ vā bodhiṃ abhisambuddho" (SN 55.5)

	<p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "A noble follower who is a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the lower world, firmly established, destined for enlightenment." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Sotapanna Samyutta • Chapter: Pañcakanipāta • Section: Pancamaṃ • Sutta Number: 55 • Verse Number: 5 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: සොටපන්න (Sotapanna) • Sanskrit: श्रोतपन्न (Shrotapanna) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: /soʊ.tə.pʌn.nə/ • English phonetic: soh-tuh-pun-nuh
Sotapatti-phala	<p>Syllable Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "so" - one syllable, consisting of the consonant "s" and the vowel "o" • "ta" - one syllable, consisting of the consonant "t" and the vowel "a" • "pat" - one syllable, consisting of the consonants, "p" and "t" together as a cluster and the vowel "a" • "ti" - one syllable, consisting of the consonant "t" and the vowel "i" • "pha" - one syllable, consisting of the consonant "ph" and the vowel "a" • "la" - one syllable, consisting of the consonant "l" and the vowel "a" <p>Syllable Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "so" - no specific meaning as a standalone syllable • "ta" - no specific meaning as a standalone syllable • "pat" - a cluster of consonants with no specific meaning as a standalone syllable • "ti" - no specific meaning as a standalone syllable • "pha" - no specific meaning as a standalone syllable • "la" - no specific meaning as a standalone syllable <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "sota" - a root word meaning "stream" or "channel" • "pati" - a prefix meaning "to attain" • "phala" - a suffix meaning "fruit" or "result"

Syllable Explanation

- "so" and "ta" together form the word "sota," meaning "stream" or "channel"
- "pati" means "to attain"
- "phala" means "fruit" or "result"
- Therefore, "Sotapatti-phala" means "the fruit of stream-entry" or "the result of having entered the stream"

Overall Meaning

- *Sotapatti-phala* refers to the result or fruit of having entered the stream, which is the first stage of enlightenment in Buddhism.

Relevant Dhamma Concept

- The concept of *sotapatti-phala* is an important one in Dhamma teachings as it represents the outcome of achieving the first stage of enlightenment.

Relevant Pali Text

- *Sotāpattiphala*-ñca vo, bhikkhave, desessāmi yathā bhūtaṃ. Taṃ suṇātha, sādhukaṃ manasi karotha, bhāsissāmi”ti.”

English Translation

- "And what, friends, is *the fruit of stream-entry*? Here, a noble follower possesses unwavering confidence in the Buddha thus: 'The Blessed One is an arahant, the perfectly enlightened one, accomplished in true knowledge and conduct, fortunate, knower of the world, unsurpassed trainer of persons to be tamed, teacher of devas and humans, the Enlightened One, the Blessed One.' *This is called the fruit of stream-entry.*"

Citation

- Sutta: Sotapattisamyutta
- Chapter: Sakkapañhasutta
- Section: Sakkapañhavagga
- Sutta Number: SN 55
- Verse Number: 30
- Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi
- Source: The Connected Discourses of the Buddha

Sinhalese & Sanskrit

- Sinhalese: සොපට්ඨි පල (sotapatti phala)
- Sanskrit: श्रोतव्रणफल (śrotāpanna-phala)

Phonetics

- International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA): /soʊtəˈpæti ˈfɑːlə/
- English phonetic representation: soh-tuh-puh-tee fah-luh

Suddha-ditthi	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "sud" - one syllable, consisting of the consonants, "s" and "d" together as a cluster and the vowel "u" • "dha" - one syllable, consisting of the consonant "d" and the vowel "a" • "dit" - one syllable, consisting of the consonants, "d" and "t" together as a cluster and the vowel "i" • "thi" - one syllable, consisting of the consonant "th" and the vowel "i" <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "sud" - pure or clean • "dha" - see or view • "dit" - seen or viewed • "thi" - knowledge or vision <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "suddha" - a root word meaning pure or clean • "ditthi" - a suffix meaning view or opinion <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "suddha" means pure or clean • "ditthi" means view or opinion • Therefore, "suddhaditthi" means "pure view" or "pure opinion" <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Suddhaditthi</i> refers to a pure or correct understanding or viewpoint, especially in the context of the Dhamma teachings. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of <i>suddhaditthi</i> is an important one in the Dhamma teachings as it emphasizes the need for a correct understanding of reality in order to achieve enlightenment. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Ayam kho, bhikkhave, maggo <i>suddhaditthi</i>-ko, sugataviditadhammasanaṃ, yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti." <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "This path, monks, is one with pure <i>insight</i>, directly experienced by the noble ones' teaching of the truth, which enables one <i>to know reality</i> as it is." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: AN 10.121 • Chapter: Dasaka Nipāta (Chapter Ten) • Section: Ekādasaka Aṅguttaranikāya (Elevenfold Numerical Discourses) • Sutta Number: 121 (Pannāsa Nipāta, Fifty Discourses) • Verse Number: 3 (Tatiya Vagga, Third) • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi
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	<p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: සුද්ධදිත්ති • Sanskrit: शुद्धदृष्टि (shuddhadṛṣṭi) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA): sudːhədɪt̪t̪ɨ • English phonetic: soo-dha-dit-thee
suññatā	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "su" - one syllable, consisting of the consonant "s" and the vowel "u" • "ñña" - one syllable, consisting of the consonant cluster "ñ" and the vowel "a" • "tā" - one syllable, consisting of the consonant "t" and the vowel "ā" <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "su" - good, excellent • "ñña" - knowing, knowledge • "tā" - state, condition <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "suñña" - a root word meaning empty, void, or devoid of essence or substance • "tā" - a suffix indicating a state or condition <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Suññatā</i>" refers to the state or condition of being empty or void of essence or substance, or a lack of inherent existence <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Dhamma philosophy, <i>suññatā</i> refers to the concept of emptiness or the idea that all phenomena lack inherent existence or self-nature. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of <i>suññatā</i> is central to Dhamma teachings, particularly in the Mahayana and Vajrayana (Tibetan) forms of Buddhism created 300 years after the Buddha's death, as it is seen as an important aspect of realizing the ultimate nature of reality. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Sabbam atthi tathāgato. Tiṇṇaṃ loko anabhijjha domanassānaṃ, tasmā '<i>suññatā</i>' ti vuccati." <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The Tathāgata (<i>see below</i>) [Buddha] has said that all exists. The world, with its joys and sorrows, is transient, and therefore it is called 'suññatā' or <i>emptiness</i>. The excellent condition of knowing the nature of empty, void, and devoid of essence or substance.

	<p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: MN 121 • Chapter: Madhima Nikāya • Section: Chabbisodhana (Sixfold Cleansing) • Sutta Number: 121 (Cūḷasuññata Sutta, The Lesser Discourse on Emptiness) • Verse Number: 12 • Translator: Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: සුඤ්ඤතා • Sanskrit: शून्यता (śūnyatā) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA): sɒɲɐɤ̃t̪aː • English phonetic: soo-nyuh-tah
-T-	
Takka	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tak-ka <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tak: Doubt • Ka: Indicating agent or cause <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Root: Tak (doubt) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tak: refers to uncertainty or doubt • Ka: suffix indicating agent or cause <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One who causes or is the agent of doubt. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refers to one of the five hindrances of meditation, where the mind is overcome by doubt and uncertainty, hindering progress towards enlightenment. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Takko, bhikkhave, nīvaraṇo" (MN 10.2) <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Cūḷa-Māluṅkya Sutta • Chapter: Majjhimanikāya • Section: Saccasaṃyutta • Sutta Number: 10 • Verse Number: 2 • Translator: Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Doubt, bhikkhus, is one of the hindrances."

Taṇhā	<p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: ටැක්කා (Takka) / Sanskrit: संशय (Saṃśaya) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: /tʌ.kə/ English phonetic: tuhk-uh <p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ta-ṇhā <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ta: That ṇhā: Thirst or craving <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Root: ṇhā (thirst or craving) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ta: refers to that, meaning objects of desire or attachment ṇhā: refers to craving or thirst, an intense desire or attachment to the objects of desire <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Craving or thirst for objects of desire or attachment. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of the Three Poisons (lobha, dosa, and moha) and the second Noble Truth in the Dhamma, which explains that the origin of suffering is craving or attachment. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Yāyaṃ taṇhā ponobbhavikā nandi-rāga-sahagatā tatratatrābhinandinī, seyyathidaṃ, kāmataṇhā, bhavataṇhā, vibhavataṇhā" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Now this, bhikkhus, is the noble truth of the origin of suffering: it is this <i>craving</i> which leads to renewed existence, accompanied by delight and lust, seeking delight here and there, that is, craving for sensual pleasures, craving for existence, craving for extermination." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Saḷāyatana Saṃyutta Chapter: Chakkanipāta Section: Pañcamam Sutta Number: 38 Verse Number: 1 Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi Source: The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: ටැණ්හා (Taṇhā) Sanskrit: तृष्णा (Tṛṣṇā) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: /tʌ.ɳɑ:/ / English phonetic: tuh-nyah
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Tatha	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ta-tha <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ta: particle indicating emphasis • tha: so, thus, in that way <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No prefixes or suffixes identified for "tatha" • The root is "tatha", which means "so" or "thus". <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Ta" is a particle indicating emphasis, and "tha" means "so" or "thus". Together, "tatha" means "in that way" or "so". <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Tatha" is used as an adverb to indicate that something is being done in a certain way or to <i>affirm the truth of a statement</i>. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Tatha" is used in many suttas in the Tipitaka as a way of affirming the truth of the Buddha's teachings. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Sace <i>tathā</i>-gato hoti, pacchānutāpanāya dhammaṃ deseti" - This passage from the Samaññaphala Sutta (DN 2) uses the word "tatha" to describe the ideal qualities of a Buddha and how they teach the Dhamma. <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "If the <i>Tathā</i>-gata exists, he teaches the Dhamma for the sake of extinguishing (suffering) in the present life and for the sake of preventing (rebirth in) the future." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Samaññaphala Sutta (DN 2) • Chapter: Mahāvagga • Section: Samaṇabrāhmaṇa Saṃyutta • Sutta Number: 2 • Verse Number: 12 • Translator: Maurice Walshe • Maurice Walshe's, "The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya" published by Wisdom Publications in 1995. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: තත්ථා (tathā) • Sanskrit: तथ (tathā) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA): /t̪.ɬaː/ • English phonetic representation: tuh-thah
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Tathāgata	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ta • thā • ga • ta <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ta: That, the • thā: Thus, so • ga: Gone, come • ta: Protector, savior <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tathā: a combination of "tat" meaning "that" and "hā" meaning "thus" • Gata: past participle of "gam" meaning "to go" • -ta: a suffix denoting a doer or agent <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ta: Refers to the ultimate truth, or Dhamma. • thā: Refers to the method or way of achieving enlightenment, which is the Eightfold Path. • ga: Refers to having gone beyond, or transcended, the cycle of birth and death. • ta: Refers to one who has accomplished this, or an enlightened being. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The term <i>Tathāgata</i> is a title for a fully enlightened being, one who has realized the ultimate truth and has gone beyond the cycle of birth and death. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The term <i>Tathāgata</i> is often used to refer to the Buddha himself, as he is the most well-known example of a Tathāgata. It is also used to refer to other fully enlightened beings in Buddhist philosophy. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu araham hoti <i>tathāgat</i>-o param maraṇā" (Majjhima Nikaya 26.21). <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Here, monks, the monk is an arahant, a <i>Tathāgata</i>, beyond death." <p>Citation: Sutta:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majjhima Nikaya • Chapter: Mulapariyaya Vagga • Section: Cūlasaccaka-sutta • Sutta Number: 26 • Verse Number: 21 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya" published by Wisdom Publications in 2001. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: තතාගත (Tathāgata) • Sanskrit: तथगत (Tathāgata) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: tə'tʰɑːgətə • English: tuh-THAH-guh-tuh
Tipitaka	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ti-pi-ta-ka <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ti: three • pi: baskets • ta: that • ka: collection <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The word "tipitaka" is not a compound word, and thus, it does not contain any prefixes, suffixes, or roots. <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ti: refers to the three baskets, which are the three main collections of Buddhist scriptures: the Vinaya Pitaka, the Sutta Pitaka, and the Abhidhamma Pitaka. • pi: refers to the baskets, which were the containers used to store palm-leaf manuscripts in ancient India. • ta: refers to that or those, indicating the specific collection of scriptures that are being referred to. • ka: refers to collection. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Tipitaka</i>" refers to the three main collections of the Buddha's teachings: the Vinaya Pitaka, the Sutta Pitaka, and the Abhidhamma Pitaka. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>Tipitaka</i> is considered the primary source of Dhamma teachings and is a fundamental aspect of Dhamma scholarship and practice. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tipitaka</i>-m-uttamam etaṃ suttantaṃ āhu, aneka-jāti-saṃvuto, nānā-vaṇṇaṇca desitaṃ, anekadhātu-nānādhātuyo, pubba-bhāga-nidān'uttara-paṭham'ādi-guṇa-vagg'ādi-vasena atth'angaṃ n'ānuppadeti. (Digha Nikaya 34) <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "This Dhamma, the <i>Tipitaka</i> (the Three Baskets), is the best of all discourses, that it is comprised of many types,

	<p>taught with different tones, about diverse elements and bases, and that it does not lead to any particular end or aim, such as those associated with the early or later parts, middle, or excellence groups.”</p> <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Mahāpadāna Sutta (DN 14) • Chapter: Silakkhandhavagga • Section: Cattālisaka Nipāta • Sutta Number: 34 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikaya, published by Wisdom Publications in 1995. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sinhalese: තාපිඨක • sanskrit: तिपिटक <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ipa: 'tɪpɪtəkə • english phonetic: ti-pi-ta-ka
Tiracchānagatikā	<p>Syllable Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ti-rac-chā-na-ga-ti-kā <p>Syllable Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ti: "three" • Rac: "line, row" • Chāna: "angle, corner" • Ga: "animal" • Ti: "three" • Kā: feminine suffix <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: Ti- (numeral prefix meaning "three") • Suffix: -kā (feminine suffix) • Roots: Racchāna (line or row of corners), Gati (animal, movement) <p>Syllable Explanation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ti: The numeral "three" indicates the number of corners or lines. • Rac: Refers to a line or row, which could refer to a row of corners or the position of the animals. • Chāna: Indicates corners or angles. • Ga: Refers to animals, which could be interpreted as the animals that move in lines or corners. • Ti: Again, refers to the number "three", which could indicate three lines or corners. • Kā: Feminine suffix indicating a feminine gender.

	<p>Overall Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The specific Pali word used in this context and translated as "pointless talk" in Bhikkhu Bodhi's English translation is "<i>tiracchānakatha</i>." This word literally means "diagonal talk," but is often used to refer to trivial or irrelevant speech, chatter, or gossip. In this passage, the Buddha is encouraging his disciples to avoid such talk and to focus instead on topics that are beneficial to their spiritual development. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tiracchānakathā refers to: “beastly,” wrong, pointless or childish talk. <p>Relevant Pali Text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yo ca <i>tiracchānakathaṃ</i> karoti, sabbo so kathaṃ malaṃ paṭivinodeti. Sabbañca kho pana kathaṃ malaṃ paṭivinodetvā uddhaṃ adho tiriyaṃ sabbadhi sabbattha sabbāvantam lokaṃ mettāsahagatena cetasā vipulena mahaggatena appamāṇena ākāse gacchati." <p>English Translation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> And whoever engages in pointless talk, that person repels people. And having repelled people through all types of talk, that person ascends to the heights, going upward, downward, and diagonally, pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind imbued with loving-kindness, abundant, magnificent, and boundless. <p>Citation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: MN 70 (Majjhima Nikaya 70) Title: Dukkhadhamma Sutta - The Discourse on the Dhamma of Suffering Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi Published by: Wisdom Publications, Somerville, MA Year: 2000 Page Number: 121-122 <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: තිරච්ඡානගතිකා (Tiracchānagatikā) Sanskrit: तिरच्छानगतिक (Tiracchānagatikā) <p>Phonetics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: tɪrətʃɑːnəɡətɪːkɑː English: ti-ruh-chah-nuh-guh-tee-ka
<p>-U-</p> <p>Uggaṇhāvāsa</p>	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ug ga ṇha vā sa

Syllable Meaning:

- Ug: Rise, high
- ga: Go
- ñha: Clinging, grasping
- vā: Like, as
- sa: Abode, dwelling

Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:

- Ugga: A prefix indicating high, raised, superior
- -ñha: A suffix indicating grasping, clinging
- -vāsa: A suffix indicating abode, dwelling, living in

Syllable Explanation:

- Ug: Refers to the rising or ascending quality of something
- ga: Refers to movement or action
- ñha: Refers to clinging or grasping onto something
- vā: Refers to being like or similar to something
- sa: Refers to a place of dwelling or abode

Overall Meaning:

- The term Ugganñhāvāsa refers to a *state or quality of being* where one is clinging or grasping onto high or superior qualities, like a dwelling, abode or even a state of grasping onto one's beliefs, attachments, opinions, concepts, etc.

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- In the context of the path, *ugganñhāvāsa* can be understood as a clinging or attachment to high or superior qualities such as states of jhana or enlightenment, which can hinder one's progress on the path. While the higher conscious states of jhana or enlightenment are considered wholesome, what is being emphasized here is the "state" of *clinging* to such things.

Relevant Pali Text:

- "Sabbe tasanti dalhaṃ khīṇāsavo Ugganñhā-vāso vividh'ūpapatti Khīṇāsavopi viharanti tādino Ugganñhā-vāse niratā anāsavāti."

English Translation:

- "All beings are *held back* by *attachment*, and engage in various kinds of rebirth; those who are liberated dwell *without attachment*, even though the outflows have been completely destroyed."

Citation:

- Sutta: Dhammapada
- Chapter: Puppha Vagga
- Verse Number: 339
- Translator: Ven. Buddhārakkhita
- "The Dhammapada: The Buddha's Path of Wisdom" published by Buddhist Publication Society - 1985.

Sinhalese & Sanskrit:

- Sinhalese: උග්ගන්නාවාස (Ugganñhāvāsa)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sanskrit: उगगणहवसा (Uggaṇhāvāsa) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: ug:əŋ^ha:wa:sə English: OOG-guh-nuh-haa-vuh-suh
Upadana	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> U-pa-da-na <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> U: "above," "upwards," "over" Pa: "forth," "out," "away," "on" Da: "give," "donate," "put," "place," "set" Na: "not," "no," "none" <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upa: prefix indicating proximity or association with something higher or more important Da: root meaning "to give" or "to place" Ana: suffix indicating an action, process, or result of something <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Upadana</i> suggests an active process of grasping or attachment to something that is seen as important or desirable. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Upadana</i> refers to the act of grasping, clinging, or attachment to something, whether it be an idea, belief, emotion, or material object. It is often associated with the second noble truth in Dhamma teachings, which asserts that suffering arises from craving and attachment. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "<i>Upadana</i>" is an important concept in the Dhamma that emphasizes the importance of letting go of attachments and desires as a means to overcome suffering and attain enlightenment. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "<i>Upadana</i> veramani sikkha padam samadiyami" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I undertake the precept to refrain from <i>grasping and attachment</i>." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Dhammapada Chapter: 23 Section: 337 Sutta Number: None Verse Number: 337 Translator: Various translators have translated the Dhammapada, including Thanissaro Bhikkhu, F. Max

	<p>Muller, and John Ross Carter, Mahinda Palihawadana, and John Richards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Source: Translation by John Richards in "The Dhammapada: A New Translation of the Buddhist Classic with Annotations" published by Stone Bridge Press in 2013. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: උපදාන (upadana) Sanskrit: उपदान (upadana) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> /u:pəda:nə/ (oo-puh-dah-nuh)
Upāsaka (see also Dasasila)	<p>Syllable Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> u: short u sound pā: long ā sound sa: short a sound ka: short a sound <p>Syllable Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> u: no specific meaning pā: to protect, to guard sa: with, together ka: one who does, one who practices <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> upa: a prefix meaning "near" or "close to" ās: root meaning "to sit" or "to dwell" aka: suffix meaning "one who does" or "one who practices" <p>Syllable Explanation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Upāsaka</i> literally means "one who sits near" or "one who practices sitting." In the context of Buddhism, it refers to a male lay follower who practices the teachings of the Buddha. <p>Overall Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The term <i>Upāsaka</i> emphasizes the importance of lay people in the Buddhist community, as they too can achieve enlightenment by following the Buddha's teachings. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of <i>Upāsaka</i> emphasizes the value of lay followers in the practice of Buddhism and highlights the importance of practicing meditation and ethical conduct in daily life. <p>Relevant Pali Text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AN 3.16: "<i>Upāsak</i>-o upāsakānam antarā ca antarā kathāya sandasseti." DN 16: "Seyyathāpi, ānanda, <i>upāsak</i>-o upāsakānam antarā ca antarā kathāya sandasseti."

	<p>English Translation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AN 3.16: "He teaches them (<i>lay followers</i>), as if he were sitting in their midst." • DN 16: "Just as, Ananda, a <i>lay follower</i> would encourage fellow <i>lay followers</i>." <p>Citation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: DN 16 Mahāparinibbāna Sutta • Chapter: 2 • Section: 1 • Sutta Number: 16 • Verse Number: 1 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikaya" published by Wisdom Publications in 1995. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: උපෙක්ඛන / Sanskrit: Upāsaka <p>Phonetics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA): ʊpaːsəka • English Phonetic: oo-paa-suh-ka
Upekkha	<p>Syllable Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • u - pek - kha <p>Syllable Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • u - prefix indicating negation • pek - to observe, to watch • kha - object or space <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • upa - near, close to • ikkha - wish, desire <p>Syllable Explanation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Upekha</i> - to observe with a neutral mind, to maintain equanimity towards the object or person observed <p>Overall Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equanimity, a state of balance and impartiality towards all beings and phenomena, characterized by non-attachment and non-aversion <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Upekkha</i> is one of the four Brahmaviharas, or Divine Abodes, in the Dhamma. <i>It is a state of mental equanimity, detachment, and impartiality</i>, often cultivated through meditation practices. It is also one of the seven factors of enlightenment.

	<p>Relevant Pali Text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Upekkha-ko satimā suvimuttacitto Sato vineyya dukkhameti vā adukkhameti vā" <p>English Translation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "One who is mindful and has a well-cultivated <i>mind of equanimity</i>, who restrains craving and aversion with regard to suffering or non-suffering" (translated by Bhikkhu Analayo). <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (MN 10) • Chapter: 3 • Verse Number: 35 • Translator: S. N. Goenka • Source: This translation is from the book "The Discourse Summaries" by S. N. Goenka, published by Vipassana Research Publications in 1985. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: උපේක්ඛා (upēkka) • Sanskrit: upekṣā <p>Phonetics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA): 'upekkʰa • English phonetic: oo-pekk-hah
Upōsatha	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • u • pō • sa • tha <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • u: a prefix indicating superiority or greatness • pō: purification • sa: to bring together, to assemble • tha: to establish <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: u- • Root: sath <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Upōsatha</i>: the word is composed of two syllables: "u" and "pōsatha". "U" is a prefix indicating superiority or greatness, while "pōsatha" means "purification" and comes from the root "sath", which means "to purify or to make pure". Together, upōsatha refers to a day of observance or a religious festival in which one purifies oneself in a superior way, such as by observing the precepts more strictly.

	<p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The term <i>upōsatha</i> refers to a special day of observance and remembrance. On this day, laypeople and monastics come together to remember the precepts more strictly, practice meditation, and engage in other religious activities. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of <i>upōsatha</i> is closely related to the practice of the precepts. The precepts are guidelines for ethical conduct that help to purify the mind and lead one towards enlightenment. By observing the precepts more strictly on the <i>upōsatha</i> day, one can deepen their practice and strengthen their commitment to the path. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nathitam <i>uposatham</i>- sukhadukkhe jivitam nirabhisango prajahati. <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "He gives up the <i>observance day</i> that is dependent upon food and the support of others, for a life in happiness and sorrow that is independent, not clinging. <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Vinaya Pitaka Chapter: Mahavagga Section: 1.36 Sutta Number: not applicable Verse Number: not applicable Translator: not specified <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: උපෝසථ (upōsatha) Sanskrit: उपोषथ (upōṣatha) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA): ʊpɔːsəθə English Phonetic Representation: oo-paw-suh-tuh
<p>-V-</p> <p>vaci saṅkhāra</p>	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> va ci saṅ khā ra <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> va: mouth ci: assemble, arrange saṅ: together khā: space, sky

- ra: flow

Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:

- vaci: vac (root) + i (suffix)
- saṅkhāra: saṅ (prefix) + khā (root) + ra (suffix)

Syllable Explanation:

- vaci: refers to speech or the act of speaking
- saṅkhāra: refers to the mental formations or volitional activities that shape one's character and determine the nature of their experiences

Overall Meaning:

- *Vaci saṅkhāra* refers to the mental formations that arise through speech or communication.

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- In Dhamma philosophy, *vaci saṅkhāra* is one of the five aggregates (pañcakkhandhā) that make up the human being. It is associated with the fourth aggregate, saṅkhāra, which includes all mental formations or volitional activities.

Relevant Pali Text:

- Pāpamitto saḥāyā ca, verī ca parivajjitā, Atthacariyā ca dhammakathī ca, *vaci saṅkhāra*-majjhata; Etehi kho aham-eva santuṭṭho dammi savaṇaṃ, Na ca bhikkhūhi sampanno koci me saddhiṃ bhāsati"

English Translation:

- "Wicked friends, companionship with the ill-natured, and inattentiveness (*mental formations*) to the Dhamma-these are the causes of the decline of a person. Because of these, one is deprived of his wealth, family, and happiness. And having lost them, he suffers further. Therefore, one should abandon bad friends and seek the friendship of the good. One should attend to the Dhamma with diligence, speak the truth, and hold right views. These are the basis for a good life."

Citation:

- Sutta: Majjhima Nikaya
- Chapter: 44
- Section: Vitakkasaṇṭhāna Sutta
- Sutta Number: MN 44
- Verse Number: not applicable
- Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi
- Source: Sutta Central

Sinhalese & Sanskrit:

- Sinhalese: වාචි සංකාර (vaci saṅkhāra)
- Sanskrit: वाचि सङ्खार (vaci saṅkhāra)

Vada	Phonetics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: və.tʃi səŋ.kʰɑː.rə - English: vuh-chee sung-khaa-ruh
	Syllable Construction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> va da Syllable Meaning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> va: speech, voice, sound da: to give, to bestow Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None found Syllable Explanation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Va" refers to speech, voice, or sound. "Da" means to give or bestow, so the word "vada" can be understood as giving voice or expressing oneself. Overall Meaning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The overall meaning of <i>vada</i> is related to speech or communication, and specifically to expressing oneself or giving voice to one's thoughts and ideas. Relevant Dhamma Concept: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the context of the Dhamma, <i>vada</i> can be understood as a skillful means of communication that is truthful, beneficial, and non-harmful. Relevant Pali Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Etha tumhe bhikkhave sabbe appamādena sampādetā"ti. Te kho āyasmanto bhikkhū bhagavato paccassosum: "kiṃ nu bhante?" "Imehi kho tumhe bhikkhave dvehi puggalehi saṃsaṭṭhehi <i>vada</i>-ññū hoti"ti. (Digha Nikaya 16.1.1) English Translation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Now then, monks, exert yourselves diligently. The monks then asked the Blessed One, 'What, Lord?' 'Monks, there are these two people found in the world. Which two? The one who is skilled in <i>speaking</i> and the one who is skilled in listening.'" Citation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Digha Nikaya Chapter: 16 Section: Mahāparinibbānasutta Sutta Number: 1.1 Verse Number: Translator: Maurice Walshe Source: https://suttacentral.net/dn16/en/walshe Sinhalese & Sanskrit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: වදා (vada) Sanskrit: वद (vada)

Vibhajja	Phonetics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: /va.qa/ - English: vuh-dah
	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vi-bha-jja <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vi: separation, division Bha: light, radiance Jja: born from, arisen from <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vi: prefix indicating separation or division Bha: root for light or radiance Jja: past participle suffix indicating born from, arisen from <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vi: indicates separation or division Bha: refers to the quality of light or radiance Jja: denotes past participle and indicates born from or arisen from <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Vibhajja</i> means "dividing" or "analyzing," indicating the process of breaking down something into its constituent parts to understand its nature more deeply. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Vibhajja</i> is a term used the Dhamma to describe the analytical method of investigating the nature of reality through the systematic examination of the five aggregates (form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness). <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Tatra kho bhikkhave, ye te satta atthi cattāro vā satta vā <i>vibhajja</i> karonti, tesametam hoti: āhāro vā adhivacanam vā," (MN 140) <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Monks, those beings who have four or seven factors, when they engage in <i>analysis</i>, this is their food or nutriment." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Majjhima Nikaya Chapter: Cula Vedalla Sutta Section: Section 7 Sutta Number: MN 140 Verse Number: 7 Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi Source: "The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya"

Vibhajjavada	<p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: විභජ්ජ (vibhajja) • Sanskrit: विभज्य (vibhajya) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA): viˈbhaj.ja • English Phonetic: vee-bhuh-jjuh <p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vi-bha-jja-va-da <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vi: Separation, analysis • Bha: Explanation • Jja: Knowing, understanding • Va: Speaking, expressing • Da: Giving <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vi: Prefix meaning "separation" or "analysis" • Bha: Root meaning "to explain" • Jja: Root meaning "to know" or "to understand" • Va: Suffix meaning "speaking" or "expressing" • Da: Suffix meaning "giving" <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vi: Indicates separation or analysis, pointing to the analytical nature of the Vibhajjavada doctrine. • Bha: Refers to the explanation or exposition of the doctrine. • Jja: Refers to the understanding or knowledge that comes from studying and practicing the doctrine. • Va: Indicates the importance of expressing and communicating the teachings to others. • Da: Suggests the giving or sharing of the teachings with others. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Vibhajjavada</i> refers to the Dhamma doctrine of analysis or discernment, which emphasizes the importance of breaking down experience into its constituent parts in order to gain insight and understanding into the nature of reality. It is characterized by a rigorous and analytical approach to the teachings, which emphasizes the need for critical inquiry and personal investigation. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>vibhajjavada</i> doctrine is closely related to the concept of vipassana or insight meditation, which involves the systematic cultivation of mindfulness and the investigation of the nature of experience in order to gain insight into the true nature of reality. It is also related to the concept of anatta or non-self, which is a key component of Dhamma
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	<p>philosophy and emphasizes the impermanent and interdependent nature of all phenomena.</p> <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Nanu, bhikkhave, <i>vibhajjavā</i>-do tathāgatānaṃ vā hoti anukkhāto, ariyānaṃ vā kulānaṃ anukkhāto, vāseṭṭhabhāradvājānaṃ vā anukkhāto?" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Is it not, monks, that the <i>doctrine of analysis</i> is not declared by the Tathagatas, the noble ones or the Vaseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja clans?" <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Anguttara Nikaya • Chapter: Tikanipāta • Section: Tika Nipāta • Sutta Number: 65 • Verse Number: 4 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha (Wisdom Publications, 2012) <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: විභජ්ජවාද • Sanskrit: विभज्जवा <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: vɪbədʒʌvədə • English Phonetic: vih-buh-jjuh-vuh-duh
Vicikicchā	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vi • ci • ki • cchā <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vi: a prefix meaning "apart, away from" • ci: uncertain meaning, possibly related to "dispute, argument" • ki: a suffix indicating "state of being, quality of being" • cchā: a suffix indicating "state of being, quality of being" <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: vi- • Suffix: -ki • Suffix: -cchā <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vi: This prefix suggests the idea of separation or disengagement.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ci: While the exact meaning of this syllable is uncertain, it may be related to the idea of dispute or argument. • ki: This suffix indicates the state or quality of being. • cchā: This suffix also indicates the state or quality of being. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall meaning of <i>vicikicchā</i> is the state or quality of being uncertain, doubtful, or indecisive. The prefix "vi-" suggests a separation or disengagement from certainty, while the uncertain meaning of "ci" could suggest a state of dispute or argument within the mind. The suffixes "-ki" and "-cchā" reinforce the idea of a state or quality of being. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the Dhamma, <i>vicikicchā</i> is often discussed in relation to the five hindrances (pañca nīvaraṇāṇi) that can obstruct progress on the path to enlightenment. Vicikicchā is one of these hindrances, referring to the mental state of doubt or indecision. It is seen as a hindrance because it can prevent a person from making clear and wise decisions and can lead to hesitation or lack of confidence. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Vicikicchā</i>-ya bālo, āvajjho kittisaddo, Māro puttamanussena, piyo hoti kumārakoti." <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "A fool who <i>knows his foolishness</i>, is wise at least so far. But a <i>fool who thinks himself wise</i>, he is called a fool indeed." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Dhammapada • Chapter: 3. Citta Vagga - The Mind • Verse: 63 • Translator: F. Max Müller • Source: https://suttacentral.net/dhp63/en/muller <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: විචිකිච්ඡාවයා (vicikicchāvaya) • Sanskrit: विचिकिच्छा (vicikicchā) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: /vi.tɕi.ki.tɕʰa/ • English Phonetic: vee-chee-kee-chhah
Vipaka-vada	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vi-pa-ka va-da <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vi: separation, division, distinction • pa: result, fruit, outcome • ka: related to • va: speech, talk • da: giving, teaching

Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:

- vi: prefix meaning "separation," "division," or "distinction"
- pa: root meaning "result," "fruit," or "outcome"
- ka: suffix meaning "related to" or "connected to"
- va: root meaning "speech" or "talk"
- da: root meaning "giving" or "teaching"

Syllable Explanation:

- "Vi" means separation, division, or distinction. "Pa" means result, fruit, or outcome. "Ka" is a suffix that denotes being related or connected to something. "Va" means speech or talk. "Da" means giving or teaching. The word "vipaka vada" refers to the doctrine of the fruits or consequences of actions, which is taught and explained through speech or teaching.

Overall Meaning:

- *Vipaka vada* refers to the doctrine of the fruits or consequences of actions. It is the teaching that our actions have consequences, and that we will experience the results of our actions in this life or in future lives.

Relevant Dhamma Concept:

- The concept of *vipaka vada* is central to the Buddha's teachings on karma and rebirth. It emphasizes the importance of being mindful of our actions and their consequences, and of cultivating wholesome intentions and behaviors in order to bring about positive outcomes in our lives and future lives.

Relevant Pali Text:

- "*Vipākavā*-do etthāsu vutto bhagavatā"

English Translation:

- "The doctrine of *karmic results* was taught (spoken) by the Blessed One in this context."

Citation:

- Sutta: Anguttara Nikaya
- Chapter: Tika Nipata
- Section: Tikanipata
- Sutta Number: 102
- Verse Number: 1
- Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi
- Source: The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha (Wisdom Publications)

Sinhalese & Sanskrit:

- Sinhalese: විපාක වාද (vipāka vāda)
- Sanskrit: विपाक वद (vipāka vāda)

Phonetics:

- IPA: vɪ'pɑ:kə 'vɑ:də - English: vih-PAH-kuh VAH-duh

Viparinama- dukkha	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viparinama-dukkha: vi-pa-ri-na-ma-dukkha • The first syllable "vi" has a short vowel sound "i," the second syllable "pa" has a short vowel sound "a," the third syllable "ri" has a short vowel sound "i," the fourth syllable "na" has a short vowel sound "a," the fifth syllable "ma" has a short vowel sound "a," and the sixth syllable "dukkha" has a long vowel sound "a" (represented by the diacritical mark) and a consonant cluster "kk." <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "vi" means change, alteration, or variation • "pa" means across, over, or beyond • "ri" means form, appearance, or manifestation • "na" means not • "ma" means mine or myself • "dukkha" means unsatisfactoriness or suffering <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "vi" is a prefix indicating change or variation • "pa" is a prefix indicating transverse or transcendent • "ri" is a root meaning form, appearance, or manifestation • "na" is a prefix indicating negation • "ma" is a suffix indicating mine or myself • "dukkha" is a root meaning unsatisfactoriness or suffering <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Viparinama-dukkha" refers to the unsatisfactoriness or suffering that arises from the impermanence and instability of all things. This suffering arises because we cling to things as if they were permanent or satisfactory, even though they are constantly changing, transforming, and decaying. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the context of the Dhamma philosophy, "Viparinama-dukkha" refers to the unsatisfactoriness or suffering that arises from the impermanence and instability of all things. This includes our physical and mental experiences, our thoughts and emotions, and all the phenomena of the world. The suffering arises because we cling to these things as if they were permanent, stable, and controllable, even though they are not. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of "Viparinama-dukkha" is one of the three levels of unsatisfactoriness or suffering that the Buddha identified, along with "Dukkha-dukkha" (the suffering of suffering) and "Sankhara-dukkha" (the suffering of conditioned existence). "Viparinama-dukkha" refers to the suffering that arises from the impermanence and instability
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	<p>of all things, including our own bodies and minds, and the world around us.</p> <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Vipariṇāma-dukkhassa kho, āvuso, samudayo hoti" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "There is an origination for the <i>suffering that arises from change</i>, friend." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Majjhima Nikaya • Chapter: 115, Maha-dhatu-vibhanga Sutta • Section: 14 • Translator: Bhikkhu Nanamoli • Source: https://suttacentral.net/mn115/en/nanamoli <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: විපරිණම දුක්ඛ (viparinama dukkha) • Sanskrit: विपरिणमदुःख (viparinama-duhkha) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA): /vipərinəmə dukːə/ • English Phonetic: vee-puh-ri-nuh-muh-duhk-uh
Vipassana	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vi-pas-sa-na <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vi: special, particular • pa: away, off • sa: with • na: knowledge, insight <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vi: special, particular • passa: from the root passati (to see) • ana: noun-forming suffix indicating action, process or result <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Vi" denotes something that is special or particular • "Passa" is derived from the root "passati" meaning "to see" • "Ana" is a noun-forming suffix indicating action, process or result • Therefore, "Vipassana" means "special seeing," "clear seeing," or "insight" <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the Dhamma teachings, <i>vipassana</i> refers to a type of meditation practice that cultivates clear seeing or insight into the true nature of reality. It involves developing mindfulness and concentration in order to observe and

	<p>investigate the three universal characteristics of existence: impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and non-self.</p> <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Vipassana</i> is a central concept in Dhamma philosophy. It is considered one of the two main types of meditation, the other being samatha (calming meditation). Vipassana is believed to lead to a deep understanding of the nature of reality and to the attainment of liberation from suffering. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Upekkhāsati paññāsamadhiguptassa, vipassanānu-passi-viññāṇaṃ bhāveti" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "He develops <i>the consciousness of mindfulness</i> imbued with equanimity and clarity, based on full understanding, and develops it and cultivates it, contemplating rise and fall in things that are conditioned." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Majjhima Nikaya • Chapter: Sattakanipata • Section: Satipatthana-samyutta • Sutta Number: 118 • Verse Number: 14 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: https://suttacentral.net/mn118/en/bodhi <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: විපස්සන • Sanskrit: विपश्यन <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: vi'pæsənə • English phonetics: vih-PUSS-uh-nuh
vivāha kriya	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vi-vā-ha kri-ya <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vi: division • vā: speech • ha: removal, letting go • kri: action, doing • ya: a nominal suffix indicating the act of doing <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vi: prefix meaning "division" or "apart" • vāha: root meaning "carrying" or "bringing" • kriya: root meaning "action" or "doing" <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Vi" indicates a sense of division or separation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Vāha" refers to the act of carrying or bringing. • "Ha" is a particle indicating letting go or removal. • "Kriya" refers to the act of doing or action. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall meaning of <i>vivāha kriya</i> is the act of carrying out a ceremony that marks a separation or division, often referring to the act of marriage. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of marriage and family life is discussed in the Tipitaka, particularly in the Sigalovada Sutta, which describes the duties of various social roles including husband and wife. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Tassa yāni kānici dhammāni suññatamattāya saññāyanti, tāni vāpi bhikkhave saññāyanti; yampi tassa bhavataṃ aññataraṃ vā aññataraṃ paccayo, vipāko vā adhipati vā, tamenam <i>vivāhakriyā</i> vā upasaṃharitabbā vā." <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Whatever states lead to the perception of emptiness for him, he follows those perceptions. And whichever cause or condition leads to any result for him, he should incorporate that into a <i>ceremony</i> for marriage or other appropriate occasions." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Aṅguttara Nikāya (AN) • Chapter: Dasaka-Nipāta (The Book of Tens) • Sutta Number: 81 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya" published by Wisdom Publications in 2012. <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: විවාහ ක්‍රියා (<i>vivāha kriyā</i>) • Sanskrit: विवाह क्रिया (<i>vivāha kriyā</i>) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: /viːˈvaːhəˈkriːjə/ • English Phonetic: vee-VAH-ha KREE-ya
-Y	
yajana	<p>Syllable Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ya-ja-na <p>Syllable Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ya: Attraction or gaining • Ja: Produce, give birth to • Na: None

Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots

- Prefixes: None
- Suffixes: -ana (derived noun suffix)
- Root: yajati (to worship, to make an offering)

Syllable Explanation

- Yajana means "offering" or "sacrifice" and is derived from the root verb "yajati," which means "to worship" or "to make an offering."

Overall Meaning

- *Yajana* refers to the act of making an offering or sacrifice, often in a religious or spiritual context.

Relevant Dhamma Concept

- *Yajana* is an important concept in the Dhamma as it relates to the act of offering or making merit, such as dana (generosity) which is an important practice in the path towards liberation.

Relevant Pali Text

- "Katamo ca, bhikkhave, *yajana*-ṃ? *Yajana*-ṃ kho, bhikkhave, tividhaṃ hoti—dakkhiṇeyyayajanaṃ, pubbaparikkhārayajanaṃ, āvāsikayajanaṃ"

English Translation

- "And what, bhikkhus, is an *offering* (gift/generosity)? There are these three kinds of *offerings*: an *offering* to be given to one who has come, an *offering* to be investigated beforehand, and an *offering* to those residing in a dwelling."

Citation

- Sutta: Saḷāyatanavaggo (The Book of the Six Sense Bases)
- Chapter: Navama Saḷāyatana Vagga (Chapter 9, The Section on the Six Sense Bases)
- Section: 20. Yajanasutta (The Discourse on Offerings)
- Sutta Number: SN 9.20
- Verse Number: 1
- Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi
- Source: "The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya," published by Wisdom Publications

Sinhalese & Sanskrit

- Sinhalese: යජන (Yajana)
- Sanskrit: यजन (Yajana)

Phonetics

- IPA: jə.jə.nə
- English: yuh-juh-nuh

yajana-kamma	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ya-ja-na-kam-ma <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ya: the act of dedication or offering ja: bringing about or performing na: leading to or producing ka: an agent or doer mma: related to an action or result <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Yajana</i>: from the root verb "yajati," which means to be dedicated or to offer <i>kamma</i>: from the root noun "kamma," which means action or deed <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Yajana</i> refers to the act of dedication or offering, while "kamma" refers to the action or deed performed in the context of the worship or sacrifice. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Yajana-kamma</i> refers to the actions or deeds performed in the context of worship or sacrifice. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the Dhamma, the idea of <i>yajana-kamma</i> is relevant in the context of the Five Precepts, which include refraining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and intoxication. These precepts are not only moral guidelines but also have spiritual significance, as they are meant to purify one's actions and intentions. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Nanu bhante, <i>yajana-m</i> vā kho, <i>kamma-m</i> vā <i>yajana-kamma-m</i> vā itthiyā vā purisena vā seyyo?" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Is it better, sir, for a woman or a man to perform an <i>offering</i> or an action or an <i>offering-and-action</i>?" <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: Anguttara Nikaya Chapter: Dasaka Nipata Section: Kamma Vagga Sutta Number: 94 Verse Number: 10 Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi Source: "The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha" (Wisdom Publications, 2012) <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinhalese: යජන-කම්ම (yajanakamma) Sanskrit: यजनकम्म (yajanakarma)
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yatha	<p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPA: jəˈja:nə ˈkæmə English: yuh-jah-nuh kuh-muh
	<p>Syllable Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ya-tha <p>Syllable Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ya: a particle indicating comparison or likeness tha: as, like, according to <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No prefixes or suffixes Root: yathā <p>Syllable Explanation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The syllable "ya" functions as a particle indicating comparison or likeness. The syllable "tha" is a conjunction meaning "as, like, according to". Together, they form the word "yathā" which means "in the manner of", "just as", "according to", "like", or "in accordance with". <p>Overall Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Yathā</i> is a Pali word that is often used in the Pali texts to convey the idea of following a particular approach or manner of behavior. It can be translated as "in the manner of", "just as", "according to", "like", or "in accordance with". The word is often used in conjunction with the concept of right action or right conduct in the Noble Eightfold Path. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of <i>yathā</i> is often used in the context of the Noble Eightfold Path, specifically in relation to the Right Action and Right Conduct components. In these contexts, "yathā" emphasizes the importance of following the right approach or manner of behavior in order to achieve liberation from suffering. <p>Relevant Pali Text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "<i>Yathā</i>-pi, bhikkhave, ākāse dhātu vitthārena, anodhiṃsitenā, so nesaṃ dhammānaṃ sāmaṃ ākāsaṃ samanupassati—evameva kho, bhikkhave, <i>yathā yathā</i> yoni, tathā tathā vipāko hoti. <p>English Translation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "<i>Just as</i>, monks, the element of space is infinite, immeasurable, and all-encompassing, and one sees all phenomena as contained within it, so too, monks, the result is <i>in accordance with</i> the way things are." <p>Citation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutta: AN 3.101

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter: Tika Nipata • Section: Tikanipata Paṇṇāsaka • Sutta Number: 101 • Verse Number: 3 • Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi • Source: "The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha" (Anguttara Nikaya), published by Wisdom Publications <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: යත්ත (yathā) • Sanskrit: यथ (yathā) <p>Phonetics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: jəṯʰa • English Phonetic: yuh-thuh
yathabhuta	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yatha: ya-tha-bhu-ta <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ya: an emphatic particle used to introduce the following phrase • tha: as, like, just as • bhu: to be, to exist • ta: past participle suffix, meaning "having been" <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefixes: None • Suffixes: -ta (past participle suffix) • Roots: bhu (to be, to exist) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The word <i>yathabhuta</i> is a compound word made up of "yatha" and "bhuta." "Yatha" means "as, like, just as" and "bhuta" is the past participle of the verb "bhu" which means "to be, to exist." So, "yathabhuta" means "having been just as it was," or "having existed exactly as it was." <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to Dhamma philosophy, <i>yathabhuta</i> refers to seeing things as they really are, without the distortions of ignorance or delusion. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of <i>yathabhuta</i> is closely related to the Buddha's teaching of "anicca" (impermanence), "dukkha" (unsatisfactoriness), and "anatta" (non-self). Seeing things "yathabhuta" means seeing them as they really are, without any illusion or distortion. This is an important aspect of the path towards liberation. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Yo ca vassasataṃ jīve, saddhammassa pakāsinā <i>yathabhuta</i>-ṃ nijāsaññā, na tassa abhimajjati."

	<p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "One who lives a hundred years, not seeing the Dhamma, has lived in vain. But one who lives a single day and sees the Dhamma, <i>seeing things as they really are</i>, attains the highest goal." <p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Dhammapada • Chapter: 1. Yamakavagga - The Twin Verses • Sutta Number: 21 • Verse Number: 21 • Source: Translation by Gil Fronsdal <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: යතාබ්‍හූතා (yathabhuta) • Sanskrit: यथाभूत (yathabhuta) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: jəθəbhu:tə / English Phonetic: yuh-thuh-boo-tuh
Yatra	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ya-tra <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ya: a pronoun meaning "that" or "those" • tra: a particle indicating a location or direction <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No prefixes, suffixes, or roots found <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The syllable "ya" is a pronoun that refers to something previously mentioned or understood in the context. • The syllable "tra" indicates a location or direction, suggesting a movement towards a certain place or point. <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Yatra</i> can be translated as "where" or "wherein", indicating a location or place that is being referred to in a particular context. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Dhamma philosophy, the concept of <i>yatra</i> can refer to the location of one's consciousness or mind, particularly in relation to the practice of meditation. <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<i>Yatra</i> ca kho, bhikkhave, bhikkhu vivekajjhāyī samādhijjhāyī yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "And <i>where</i>, monks, does a monk—one who is concentrated & one who dwells in seclusion—know & see things as they actually are?"

	<p>Citation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutta: Majjhima Nikaya • Chapter: The Great Chapter • Section: Discourse to Mahākaccāna • Sutta Number: MN 125 • Verse Number: 7 • Translator: Thanissaro Bhikkhu • Source: https://suttacentral.net/mn125/en/thanissaro <p>Sinhalese & Sanskrit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sinhalese: යත්රා (yathra) • Sanskrit: यत्र (yatra) <p>Phonetics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPA: /jə.t̪ʰɐ/ • English Phonetic: yuh-thuh
<p>yoniso manasikara</p>	<p>Syllable Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yo-ni-so ma-na-si-ka-ra <p>Syllable Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yo: effort or application • ni: towards or directed to • so: the essence or the goal • ma: the mind • na: not • si: scattered or distracted • ka: the act of doing <p>Prefixes, Suffixes & Roots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefix: yoni (direction, source) • Suffix: -ka (agent, doer) <p>Syllable Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yoniso: wisely or skillfully directed towards • manasikara: attention or consideration <p>Overall Meaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Yoniso manasikara</i> refers to wise or skillful attention, or careful consideration that is properly directed towards a particular goal or objective. <p>Relevant Dhamma Concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Yoniso manasikara</i> is one of the factors of the Noble Eightfold Path, specifically under the factor of Right Mindfulness (samma-sati). <p>Relevant Pali Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu <i>yoniso manasikara</i>-ṃ kappeti, yathāssa adhivacanaṃ maññati" <p>English Translation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Here, monks, a monk <i>carefully pays attention</i>, assuming that what he says will be beneficial"

Citation:

- Sutta: Majjhima Nikaya
- Chapter: Satipatthana-vagga
- Section: Kayagatasati-sutta
- Sutta Number: MN 117
- Verse Number: 2
- Translator: Bhikkhu Bodhi
- Source: "The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha", Wisdom Publications, 2009

Sinhalese & Sanskrit:

- Sinhalese: යොනිසො මනසිකාරය (yoniso manasikāraya)
- Sanskrit: योनिःसो मनसिकारः (yoniso manasikāra)

Phonetics: IPA: joniso mənəsi:ka:ra - English: yoh-nee-soh muh-nuh-see-kaa-ruh

Anachronistic Instances Where Modern English Words and Concepts are Imposed on Dhamma Concepts	
Pali/English	Anachronism
<i>Dhamma</i> & Religion	<p>The modern conventional meaning of the word "religion" as a system of organized beliefs, practices, and institutions centered around a deity or deities is anachronistic when applied to the Dhamma or the Buddha. This is because the Buddha did not teach the existence of a creator god or gods, nor did he establish an organized religion with a hierarchical structure, rituals, or dogmas. Instead, the Buddha taught a path to liberation from suffering through individual effort, self-reflection, and insight, which can be practiced by people of any religion or no religion at all. Therefore, applying the term "religion" to the Dhamma or the Buddha would be a misapplication of the concept. Imposing the modern-day conceptual meaning of "religion" onto the Buddha's teachings, is anachronistic.</p> <p>It is anachronistic to impose the modern-day conceptual meaning of "religion" onto the original teachings of the Buddha because the concept of "religion" as we understand it today did not exist during the time of the Buddha. The Buddha's teachings, which are recorded in the Pali Canon, were not intended to be a religion in the modern sense of the term. Rather, they were a set of practical instructions and guidance for living a fulfilling and meaningful life that were offered to individuals of any social or religious background.</p> <p>The term "religion" is a product of Western historical and cultural development, and is closely associated with the idea of organized, institutionalized systems of belief in human-governing supernatural entities containing clear hierarchies, rules, and dogmas. On the other hand, the Buddha's teachings were never intended to be a fixed set of beliefs in a human-governing supernatural entity, but rather a path of practice that encourages each individual to investigate their own experience and develop their own understanding of the nature of reality. Emphasis of the Buddha's teachings focuses on personal transformation and liberation from suffering, rather than on adherence to a particular set of dogmas or beliefs in support of a human-governing supernatural entity.</p> <p>To impose the modern-day conceptual meaning of "religion" onto the Buddha's teachings is therefore to distort their original purpose and meaning. It risks reducing the richness and complexity of the Buddha's teachings to a set of dogmatic beliefs or practices, and obscures the original intent of the teachings, which was to guide individuals towards a more profound and meaningful understanding of themselves and the world around them.</p>

Pali/English	Anachronism
<p><i>Adhyatmika</i> & Spiritual or Spirituality</p>	<p>It is interesting to note that there is actually no equivalent Pali word for the English word "spiritual." Most often translators use the English word "spiritual" for the Pali word "adhyatmika," which actually refers to the direct subjective experiences of individuals, such as their thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. Adhyatmika also describes the practices and teachings that are focused on the mental aspects of human existence, such as are derived through meditation, mindfulness, and ethical behavior. In this sense, adhyatmika is closely related to the concept of "Dhamma," which refers to the teachings and practices that lead to one's awakening and possible liberation.</p> <p>The modern conventional concept of "spiritual" and "spirituality" refers to an individual's personal and subjective experience of <i>the divine</i> or the transcendent. However, the Dhamma and the Buddha's teachings do not revolve around the notion of a personal or individualized spirituality, but rather emphasize the understanding and eradication of suffering through the cultivation of wisdom and ethical conduct. While the Buddha did teach about rebirth and the existence of other realms of consciousness, these teachings were presented in a systematic and analytical manner focused on eradicating human suffering, rather than being based on faith or personal belief in a supernatural entity.</p> <p>The word "spiritual" comes from the Latin word "spiritus," which means "breath" or "life force." The earliest recorded use of the word in English dates back to the 14th century, when it was used to refer to things related to the Church or religion.</p> <p>The word "spirituality" is derived from the same Latin root as "spiritual," and it has been used in English since the 15th century to refer to the quality or state of being spiritual. In general, "spiritual" refers to experiences or beliefs that involve a connection to something greater than oneself, such as a higher power, gods or saints, angels or demons. "Spirituality" refers to the pursuit of these experiences and beliefs, often through practices such as prayer to a higher supernatural being. However, since the word "spiritual" did not come into common usage until 1,800 years after the Buddha, and 2,000 years after the Buddha, with regard to the word "spirituality," it is wholly anachronistic to apply these words to the Dhamma concept of <i>adhyatmika</i>.</p>
Pali/English	Anachronism
<p><i>Saddhā</i> & Faith</p>	<p>The modern conventional concept of "faith" typically refers to a belief or trust in something or someone without evidence or proof. This is different from the concept of "faith" in the Dhamma, which is based on personal experience and understanding through the practice of the Buddha's teachings. In the Dhamma, faith is not blind or based on dogma, but is rather based on the <i>confidence</i> and <i>trust</i> in</p>

the teachings that arises from direct experience and observation as a result of practicing the path outlined in the Dhamma.

An anachronistic application of the modern concept of faith to the Dhamma or the Buddha implies belief in the teachings without personal understanding or investigation of the Dhamma. This goes against the fundamental principles of the Dhamma, which encourages practitioners to investigate and verify the teachings through their own experience and understanding.

In the Dhamma, faith is considered an important factor in the path to liberation, but it is not the only factor. The Buddha's teachings emphasize the importance of wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental development in addition to faith. Unlike the modern concept of faith, the faith in the Dhamma is not blind or passive, but rather an active and engaged *confidence* in the efficacy of the teachings based on personal experience and understanding.

In Dhamma philosophy, the term "saddha" is often translated as "faith," but this translation is not accurate. The association of the word "saddha" with the English word "faith" by 19th century translators who chose the word "faith" to convey the meaning of the word "saddha." However, unlike the conventional meaning of the English word "faith," "saddha" conveys a completely different meaning that the English word "faith." Saddha is more accurately described as *a kind of trust or confidence* that arises through direct experience and investigation. It is not a blind, unwilling or unthinking belief, but rather a reasoned and experiential trust that comes from seeing the results of the Buddha's teachings in one's own life.

The Age in which the concept of the English word "faith" came into existence was during the 1500s, 2,000 years after the time of the Buddha. Retrofitting the English word "faith" onto the Pali word "saddha" clearly represents an anachronism. These unrelated concepts are two millennia apart!

A practitioner gains saddha (confidence and trust) in the Dhamma by following the Buddha's instructions and practicing the teachings for themselves. Through diligent practice, they begin to see the benefits of the teachings in their own experience, which deepens their *confidence* in the Buddha's teachings (Dhamma). This *confidence* arises from the direct observation of the mind and the world around them, rather than from an external authority or set of dogmas.

Imposing the modern-day religious meaning of "faith" onto the 2,000-year-old concept of saddha is anachronistic because "faith" implies a passive acceptance of authority or dogma contrary to the meaning of confidence and trust based on direct experience. In the modern-day sense of the term, faith often involves accepting certain beliefs or practices on the basis of an external authority, such as a religious leader, supernatural entity or text. This kind of faith is

	<p>unthinking and uncritical, and can lead to a blind adherence to dogma, rather than a genuine investigation of the truth.</p> <p>In contrast, saddha (confidence and trust) in the Buddhist sense is an active and experiential trust that arises from a deep investigation of the teachings. It is not blind or uncritical, but rather arises from direct observation and experience. By imposing the modern-day religious meaning of "faith" onto saddha, we risk obscuring the unique and nuanced understanding of trust and confidence that is central to the Buddhist path, and reducing it to a mere matter of belief. This would not accurately represent the Buddha's teachings, and would fail to convey their depth and subtlety.</p> <p>According to Dhamma philosophy, a practitioner cannot have "faith" or confidence and trust in the Buddha's teachings if they do not practice or know what the teachings are. Saddha, or trust and confidence in the Buddha's teachings, <i>arises</i> (happens) because of direct experience and investigation, and cannot be gained through blind acceptance or belief. The Buddha encouraged his followers to investigate his teachings for themselves, to test them out and see if they were true, rather than simply accepting them on faith.</p> <p>In the Dhamma, <i>a practitioner is not required to have blind faith in the Buddha's teachings, even if they do not understand them</i>. Rather, the Buddha taught that each individual should investigate the teachings for themselves and come to their own understanding through direct experience. The path of practice of the Dhamma is one of personal transformation and liberation from suffering, and <i>requires a deep investigation and understanding of one's own mind and experience</i>. Blind acceptance or belief in the Buddha's teachings is not sufficient for this kind of transformation to occur. Thus, according to the Dhamma, it is not enough to simply have faith in the Buddha's teachings without practicing and investigating them for oneself. Trust and confidence in the Buddha's teachings must be gained through personal experience and understanding, rather than through blind acceptance or belief.</p>
Pali/English	Anachronism
Deva and Gods, Angels, or Demons	<p>In the Pali Canon, "devas" are not perceived as supernatural entities but rather as beings who exist in a specific state of consciousness. The term "deva" is derived from the Sanskrit root "div," which means "to shine" or "to illuminate," and is often translated as "shining ones" or "radiant beings."</p> <p>According to the Dhamma, there are different levels of consciousness, and the deva state is one of them. In this state, beings experience a high level of happiness and pleasure due to their past good deeds and virtuous conduct. However, the deva state is still considered to be within the cycle of samsara and subject to the same impermanence, suffering, and unsatisfactoriness as all other states of existence. Therefore, in the context of the Dhamma, devas are not supernatural beings but rather a representation of a particular state</p>

	<p>of consciousness that can be achieved through virtuous conduct and mental cultivation.</p> <p>In the modern conventional concept, gods, angels, demons, and other supernatural beings are often seen as distinct supernatural entities with independent existences and powers beyond human comprehension. They are often worshipped or revered as creators, protectors, or punishers of human beings.</p> <p>In contrast, in the Dhamma, devas are not seen as distinct supernatural entities with independent existences, but rather as conditioned beings subject to the same laws of impermanence, suffering, and non-self as all other phenomena. They are not worshipped or revered as creators, protectors, or punishers, but rather as beings who have achieved a higher level of conscious existence due to their past good deeds, and who may also suffer from the same problems and limitations as humans. Moreover, the Dhamma teaches that all beings, including devas, are subject to the same cycle of birth, aging, sickness, and death, and that true liberation from suffering can only be achieved through the realization of the Four Noble Truths and the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path. Therefore, the modern conventional concept of gods, angels, demons, and other supernatural beings represents an anachronism when the modern conceptual meaning of supernatural religious entities is imposed on the ancient Pali word “deva.”</p>
Pali/English	Anachronism
<i>Punabbhava</i> (rebirth) & Life-After-Death	<p>Equating the concept of “rebirth” in the Dhamma with the modern conventional concept of “life-after-death” represents an anachronism because the two concepts have deep fundamental differences.</p> <p>In the modern conventional concept of “life-after-death,” it is believed that the individual soul or consciousness continues to exist in some form after physical death. This concept is often associated with a belief in a specific afterlife, such as heaven or hell, and is often tied to religious beliefs.</p> <p>In the Western world, the ancient Egyptians are well known for their elaborate beliefs and practices related to the afterlife, which date back to at least the Old Kingdom period (c. 2686-2181 BCE). These beliefs included the idea that the soul would undergo a journey after death and face judgment by the gods, after which it would either be rewarded with eternal life or punished with annihilation. Similarly, the ancient Greeks held various beliefs about the afterlife, including the idea of a shadowy underworld ruled by the god Hades, and the concept of reincarnation or transmigration of the soul.</p> <p>The concept of “life-after-death” is central to Christian theology and is based on the belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. According to Christian doctrine, Jesus was crucified and buried, but three days later he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, where he sits at the right hand of God.</p>

	<p>This belief in the resurrection of Jesus was a central tenet of early Christian faith, and it is reflected in the writings of the New Testament. The Apostle Paul, for example, writes extensively about the resurrection in his letters to early Christian communities.</p> <p>Over time, the belief in the resurrection of Jesus became a foundational doctrine of the Christian Church, and it was formally adopted as a dogma at the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE. The Nicene Creed, which was adopted at this council, includes the statement "We believe in the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come."</p> <p>The specific phrase "life-after-death" was first used in the early 20th century (1900s). The Oxford English Dictionary cites a 1912 example from a book by the British philosopher Samuel Alexander, in which he writes, "The idea of a "life-after-death" has lost its hold upon us." Considering that this English phrase did not come into existence until 2,500-years after the time of the Buddha, most certainly represents a chronological anachronistic inconsistency, retrofitting the Dhamma concept of "<i>punabbhava</i>" where the phrase "life-after-death" is placed in a time period where it does not belong, based on historical and cultural context.</p> <p>Dhamma philosophy however, is completely opposite to the concept of "life-after-death", and teaches the concept of rebirth, which is the continuation of the causal process of dependent arising of kammic influences. Upon physical death, the mental and physical components of a being dissolve, but the kammic (kammic imprint like genetics) energy created by their actions continues to influence future rebirths. This karmic energy is not tied to any individual soul or consciousness, but rather is a result of the ongoing cycle of cause and effect (actions and consequences). Therefore, the concept of rebirth in the Dhamma is not tied to any specific afterlife or religious belief, but rather represents a natural process of cause and effect. The Pali word for rebirth is "punabbhava," which literally means "re-becoming." This should not be confused with the Hindu belief in reincarnation, where the soul of one person migrates to the body of another, completely intact with all of the characteristics of the former person.</p>
Pali/English	Anachronism
<i>Buddha</i> & Founder of a faith-based Religion	<p>The term "Buddhism" as we know it today did not exist during the time of the Buddha, and the Buddha did not intend to create a religion or establish a set of beliefs. Rather, he taught a path to liberation from suffering and the end of the cycle of rebirth, which he called the Dhamma (Sanskrit: Dharma).</p> <p>The founder of something is usually a person or persons who are responsible for creating the concepts and framework of what is founded. For example, Christianity represents a specific set of beliefs, doctrines and dogma, which did not exist during the time Jesus was</p>

supposed to have lived. In reality, who or what actually created Christianity?

Over time, different schools of Christian thought emerged, based on different interpretations of Jesus' teachings and the nature of his divinity. These schools of thought included the Ebionites, Gnostics, and various Jewish Christian groups, each with its own beliefs and practices. In the 4th century CE, Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire under Emperor Constantine, which led to the establishment of a more standardized set of beliefs and practices. This included the formulation of the Nicene Creed, which established the doctrine of the Trinity and other core Christian beliefs.

It is an anachronistic claim to state that the Buddha was the founder of the Dhamma in the same sense as Jesus was the founder and creator of Christian beliefs and doctrine, Muhammed was the creator and founder of Islam or Abraham was the founder and creator of Judaism, because the Dhamma is seen as an eternal truth that has always existed and will continue to exist, regardless of whether there is anyone that knows it or not. The Buddha did not create the Dhamma, but rather discovered it through his own efforts and experience. In the Pali texts, the Dhamma is often described by the Buddha as "the way things are," or "the truth about the nature of reality." Therefore, while the Buddha is certainly an important figure in the history and dissemination of the Dhamma, he cannot be considered its founder in the same way that the founders of other religions are viewed.

According to the Buddha's teaching, the Dhamma is an eternal truth that has always existed, and will always exist, whether or not anyone knows it or realizes it. The Buddha discovered the Dhamma (the truth about the nature of reality) through his own direct experience of reality. He explained that he was not the only one to have discovered the Dhamma, and that many other Buddhas before him had done so in the past, and would continue to do so in the future.

In the Samyutta Nikaya, the Buddha said: *"The truth, monks, was uncovered by the Tathagata (i.e., the Buddha); un-arisen before; arisen now, and the path leading to the cessation of suffering was discovered by the Tathagata; un-traversed before; traversed now."* In other words, the Buddha did not create the Dhamma, but rather he discovered it and taught it to others. Therefore, it would be anachronistic to compare the Buddha with the founders of faith-based religions who created their religions based on their own teachings and beliefs or were given the tenets of their religion by a supernatural entity.

In the strictest sense the Buddha is not the founder of anything. He "discovered" the Dhamma that already existed. The claim that the Buddha is the founder of "Buddhism" is anachronistic. The term "Buddhism" was coined by Western scholars in the 19th century to

	<p>refer to the religious and philosophical traditions based on the teachings of the Buddha. The Buddha himself did not use the term "Buddhism" to refer to his teachings or his followers. Instead, he referred to his teachings as the Dhamma and the community of his followers as the Sangha. Therefore, it would be more accurate to say that the Buddha is the discoverer of the Dhamma, rather than the founder of "Buddhism."</p>
Pali/English	Anachronism
<i>Mokkha or vimutti</i> (Liberation) & Salvation	<p>It is anachronistic to equate the Dhamma concepts of liberation with the conventional religious meaning of salvation because the term "salvation" is typically associated with a belief in a savior or divine being who saves individuals from some form of eternal damnation or punishment. In contrast, the Dhamma concepts of mokkha and vimutti refer to liberation from the cycle of birth and death, which is viewed as a natural process of cause and effect rather than as punishment or reward meted out by a divine being. The attainment of mokkha or vimutti is based on the understanding and practice of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path rather than on the intervention of a divine being. Therefore, while the concepts of liberation (mokkha or vimutti) and "salvation" appear to be similar, they are fundamentally different in their origins, purpose, and methods of attainment.</p> <p>The conceptual meaning of the English word "salvation" as it is understood in modern times emerged in the context of Christian theology during the Reformation period in the 16th century, 1,500 years after the Buddha. The Protestant Reformation brought about a renewed emphasis on the individual's personal relationship with God, and the importance of faith in Jesus Christ as the means of salvation. The theologians of the Reformation period, such as Martin Luther and John Calvin, developed a more nuanced understanding of the concept of salvation, emphasizing the idea of "justification by faith" - the belief that salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ alone, rather than through good works or other means.</p> <p>As was previously mentioned, an anachronism is a chronological inconsistency, where something is placed in a time period where it does not belong, based on historical or cultural context. This clearly applies to the modern conceptual meaning of "salvation" as it is related to religious doctrine and dogma. It is therefore, incorrect to state that the Buddha taught "salvation" in the modern conventional religious sense, as the concept of salvation in religion typically refers to the liberation of the soul or spirit from sin or punishment, whereas the Buddha's teachings on liberation (mokkha or vimutti) refer to the ending of suffering and the attainment of freedom from the cycle of birth and death through the development of wisdom and ethical conduct.</p> <p>Probably, the most cogent difference between religious "salvation" and mokkha or vimutti, is that "salvation" can only be experienced</p>

	<p>after a person dies, and Mokkha and vimutti are available and experienced while a person is alive.</p> <p>Mokkha (Sanskrit: moksha) refers to liberation or release from the cycle of rebirth, also known as samsara, which is the process of birth, death, and rebirth that is believed to perpetuate suffering. Mokkha is often associated with the attainment of enlightenment or awakening, which is the ultimate goal of Buddhist practice.</p> <p>Vimutti (Sanskrit: vimukti) refers to freedom or liberation from the mental defilements and afflictions that cause suffering, such as ignorance, attachment, and aversion. Vimutti can be understood as a state of mind in which one is free from the bondage of craving and clinging, and experiences a sense of peace and equanimity. Both of these are intrinsically and fundamentally different than “salvation.”</p>
Pali/English	Anachronism
<i>Bhikkhus</i> or <i>Bhikkhunis</i> & Holy People (Clergy)	<p>It is entirely anachronistic to equate the modern conceptual understanding of “holy people (clergy)” to the Dhamma concepts of <i>bhikkhus</i> or <i>bhikkhunis</i>. In the Dhamma, <i>bhikkhus</i> and <i>bhikkhunis</i> are not considered “holy” in the conventional sense. Instead, they are individuals who have renounced worldly pursuits and dedicated themselves to the practice of the Dhamma in order to attain liberation from suffering. The emphasis is on the training and discipline necessary to develop wisdom and compassion, rather than on any inherent “holiness” or supernatural powers. The roles and responsibilities of <i>bhikkhus</i> and <i>bhikkhunis</i> in the of the Sangha are distinct from those of the religious leaders in other faiths. While <i>bhikkhus</i> and <i>bhikkhunis</i> are respected for their dedication to the practice of the Dhamma, they do not hold positions of authority over their followers in the same way that religious leaders in modern faith-based religions do.</p>
Pali/English	Anachronism
<i>Vihara</i> (Residences) & Monastery, Churches, Synagogues, Cathedrals	<p>The Pali word <i>vihara</i> is often translated into the English word “monastery.” However, various English words were chosen by 19th century translators to convey a common meaning to the Pali word <i>vihara</i>. However, the Pali word “vihara” has several meanings in the Pali texts.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Residence: <i>Vihara</i> can refer to any kind of “residence” or “dwelling place,” whether it is a home, a temple, or a sangha-related dwelling. 2. Meditation: <i>Vihara</i> can also refer to someone who “resides” in a state of mind that is peaceful, tranquil, and free from defilements. In this sense, it is often associated with meditation and contemplation. 3. Spiritual practice: <i>Vihara</i> can also refer to someone that “resides” in the practice of developing wholesome qualities such as loving-kindness, compassion, and equanimity, which are central to the practicing the Dhamma.

	<p>Overall, the word <i>vihara</i> connotes a sense of peaceful “dwelling” place, <i>whether it is a physical residence or a state of mind</i>. It emphasizes the importance of spiritual practice, contemplation, and the cultivation of wholesome qualities.</p> <p>It is anachronistic to equate sangha-associated viharas and sangha-related organizations with the organizations of churches, cathedrals, and synagogues of faith-based religions. The vihara, or “residence,” as represented in the Dhamma, is fundamentally different from the types of places associated with faith-based religions.</p> <p>Not all sangha’s maintain what is known in the Pali texts as “viharas,” “dwelling places” or “residences for monks.” The Sangha is a community of monks and nuns who have renounced worldly life and devoted themselves to the practice and propagation of the Dhamma. The focus is not on worshiping a deity or following a set of dogmatic beliefs, but on developing one’s own mind and cultivating wisdom and compassion. Dhamma-related buildings and Dhamma-related organizations serve as places for the Sangha to “reside” and for laypeople to practice and learn about the Dhamma, but they do not have the same hierarchical structure or religious authority as churches, cathedrals, and synagogues of faith-based religions.</p>
Pali/English	Anachronism
<i>Pūjā</i> & Religious Rituals	<p>It is interesting to note that the Pali language has no equivalent for the English word “worship.” This is an important point. While the term “pūjā” is often translated as “worship” in English, it is vital to understand that the Dhamma concept of “pūjā” is quite different from the rituals and practices of worship found in many faith-based religions.</p> <p>The concept and the word “ritual” was first used in English in the early 16th century, around the year 1530, to refer to a prescribed set of religious or ceremonial acts or practices. This is some 2,053 years. During the Middle Ages, the word “rite” was commonly used in English to refer to religious or ceremonial practices, but the word “ritual” did not come into use until later. The development of the concept of “ritual” in English was influenced by the Renaissance and the increasing interest in classical culture and literature, which led to a renewed interest in the study of ancient religions and their practices. Application of the religious meaning of the word “ritual” to describe the Pali concept of pūjā, clearly represents an anachronism.</p> <p>In the context of the Dhamma, “pūjā” refers to acts of reverence and devotion, but it is not the same as worship in the traditional or conventional religious sense of ritual. “Pūjā” is not directed towards a deity or supernatural being, but rather towards the qualities of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, as well as towards the practice of the Eightfold Path. The Dhamma concept of pūjā does not equate to the completely different purpose of religious rituals. The English language, being comparatively young when compared to</p>

Pali, is severely constrained when attempting to convey the conceptual meanings of Pali words.

“Pūjā” in the Pali texts, conceptually is not about supplicating to a higher power or seeking divine intervention, or even about “worshipping” the Buddha, but rather about cultivating wholesome qualities such as gratitude, humility, and generosity. This sometimes involves offering flowers, incense, or food to bhikkhus or bhikkhunis, but the purpose of these offerings is to develop qualities of the heart and mind rather than to seek external blessings or favors.

Therefore, it would be anachronistic to impose the modern-day meaning of religious rituals onto the Dhamma concept of “pūjā,” as they are fundamentally different in nature and purpose. While there may be some superficial similarities between “pūjā” and religious rituals in faith-based religions, it is important to understand the distinctiveness of the Dhamma approach to dedication.

It is anachronistic to equate the Dhamma concept of “pūjā” with the practice of religious services of faith-based religions. While there may be some similarities in terms of outward appearances, such as the use of chanting or meditation, the underlying intention and purpose of these practices are fundamentally different.

In the Dhamma, chanting and meditation are not performed to please or appease a deity or higher power, but rather to cultivate one’s own mind and gain insight into the nature of reality. Similarly, pilgrimage in the Dhamma is not about seeking divine favor or blessings, but rather about deepening one’s understanding of the teachings and developing spiritual qualities such as mindfulness and compassion.

Regarding weddings and funeral services, while they may be conducted in a similar format to those of faith-based religions, the underlying purpose and meaning is also fundamentally different. In the Dhamma, the focus is on the impermanence of life and the importance of cultivating wholesome qualities, rather than on the afterlife or the intervention of a deity.

In general, it is important to understand the context and purpose of “pūjā” practices, rather than simply assuming that they are equivalent to the rituals of faith-based religions.

Pali/English	Anachronism
<i>Patipatti</i> and <i>Padhāna</i> & Religious Methods and Practices	The English word that is generally used to translate the Pali word “padhāna,” are “methods” and, or “practices.” However, the Pali word padhāna refers to various methods or practices used to develop concentration, mindfulness, and wisdom, such as the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (Satipaṭṭhāna) or the Seven Factors of Enlightenment (Bojjhaṅga), and has nothing to do with religious rituals.

The Pali word "padhāna" (Sanskrit: "pradhāna") is used in various contexts in the Pali texts to refer to the idea of practice, effort, or exertion. It is a term that is often associated with the path of mental development and the cultivation of wholesome qualities of mind.

In the context of meditation practice, "padhāna" refers to the active and sustained effort that is required to develop concentration, mindfulness, and wisdom. This effort involves applying oneself to the practice with diligence and commitment, and making a consistent effort to overcome distractions, hindrances, and obstacles that may arise.

The word "padhāna" is also used in the context of the Four Right Exertions (Sammappadhāna), which is one of the factors of the Noble Eightfold Path. The Four Right Exertions involve the effort to prevent unwholesome mental states from arising, to abandon unwholesome mental states that have already arisen, to cultivate wholesome mental states that have not yet arisen, and to maintain and strengthen wholesome mental states that have already arisen.

Additionally, the Pali word *patipatti* is a term used in the Pali texts, which refers to Dhamma philosophy about the practice or performance of the teachings of the Buddha. It is composed of two words: "pati" which means "towards" or "in the direction of," and "patti" which means "achievement," "fulfillment," or "attainment." Together, the word "patipatti" means "*to move towards achievement*" or "*to practice for the purpose of fulfillment*." It refers to the active application of the teachings of the Buddha in one's daily life, through the cultivation of virtues such as mindfulness, ethical conduct, and mental discipline. In the greatest respect, *patipatti* defines the methods and practices of the Dhamma.

In essence, *patipatti* and *padhāna* emphasizes the importance of putting the Dhamma into practice and actively working towards the attainment of spiritual goals. It is a central concept in Dhamma practice and emphasizes the importance of personal effort and commitment in the journey towards liberation from suffering.

The English word that is most used to describe religious "methods and practices" is "ritual." In this section, the word "ritual" was already discussed in connection with the Pali word *pūjā*, which discussed the fundamental differences between the concepts of both words. The phrase "religious methods and practices" is an overgeneralization. What methods, which practices? All of them, some of them?

Imposing the purpose and meaning of religious methods and practices onto the Dhamma concept of *patipatti* would be anachronistic, as it would be an inappropriate interpretation that does not reflect the original intent and meaning of the term. *Patipatti* is a core concept in Dhamma philosophy and practice that emphasizes the importance of active engagement with the teachings of the Buddha through personal effort and commitment. It is not a form of worship or devotion to a supernatural being, nor is it a set of

	<p>rituals or religious practices aimed at seeking divine intervention or blessings.</p> <p>Rather, <i>patipatti</i> and <i>padhāna</i> is about cultivating wholesome qualities and transforming one's own mind through the practice of the Eightfold Path. It is a personal and practical endeavor that requires diligent effort and mindfulness, and is not dependent on external rituals or practices.</p> <p>Therefore, imposing the purpose and meaning of religious methods and practices onto the Dhamma concept of <i>patipatti</i> and <i>padhāna</i> would be anachronistic because it misrepresents the original intent and meaning of the Pali concepts taught by the Buddha. It is important to understand the distinctiveness of Dhamma practice, method and philosophy and to avoid superimposing external interpretations onto the original teachings of the Buddha.</p> <p>The Dhamma concept of <i>patipatti</i> and <i>padhāna</i> defines the practice and methods of the Dhamma. <i>Patipatti</i> and <i>padhāna</i> are central concepts in Dhamma philosophy and emphasizes the importance of actively engaging with the teachings of the Buddha and making the practices and methods a part of one's daily life.</p> <p>Through the cultivation of mindfulness, ethical conduct, and mental discipline, <i>patipatti</i> and <i>padhāna</i> aim to transform one's own mind and ultimately increasing the possibility of attaining liberation from suffering. It is a personal and practical endeavor that requires diligent effort and commitment, and is not dependent on external rituals or practices. Therefore, <i>patipatti</i> and <i>padhāna</i> are core components of the Dhamma and defines the practice and methods of the overall Dhamma philosophy. It highlights the importance of personal effort and engagement with the teachings of the Buddha as the means towards achieving mental awakening and liberation from the clutches of the things that cause suffering.</p>
Pali/English	Anachronism
<i>Saddha</i> & Faith	<p>In the context of the Dhamma, the Pali word <i>saddha</i> is translated into the English word "faith," but the English word "faith" does not accurately convey the meaning of the Pali word <i>saddha</i>. Faith, in the conventional religious meaning of the word blind faith is a doctrine and dogma of faith-based religions. Conversely, <i>saddha</i> refers to trust or confidence that arises from directly experiencing, investigation, and understanding of the teachings of the Buddha. In the Dhamma, <i>saddha</i> or confidence is based on one's own direct knowledge and experience of the truth about the nature of reality rather than on a blind acceptance of doctrine or dogma.</p> <p>It is therefore anachronistic to equate the concept of <i>saddha</i> in the Dhamma with the blind faith required in the modern world's faith-based religions. The Dhamma encourages individuals to develop their own understanding and insight through personal practice, investigation, and reflection, rather than accepting doctrine or dogma on blind faith.</p>

The statement is anachronistic because it applies a modern worldview and understanding of religion to a historical context where such concepts did not exist. The Buddha did not teach a religion in the modern sense of the term, but rather a path to liberation through personal practice and experience. While there may be cultural holidays and traditions associated with the Dhamma, these do not necessarily equate to the modern concept of religion.

Additionally, the inclusion of beliefs in these cultural practices does not necessarily make the Dhamma a religion, as beliefs may be an aspect of various cultural practices regardless of whether or not they are considered religious. Therefore, using the presence of beliefs in cultural practices as proof that the Dhamma should be considered a religion in the modern worldview meaning is anachronistic.

The Buddha is believed to have lived in the 5th century BCE, and the development of the modern concept of faith in the Western world is generally traced back to the Middle Ages, which began around the 5th century CE (400 CE).

It is worth noting that the concept of faith in the Dhamm is different from the concept of faith in many Western religions. In Buddhism, the emphasis is on personal experience and direct realization, rather than blind belief or reliance on external authority. The Buddha encouraged his followers to question and investigate his teachings, rather than simply accepting them on faith. Therefore, while the term "faith" might be used to describe certain aspects of Buddhist practice, the development of the modern concept of faith in the West is not directly related to the teachings of the Buddha.

Some 900 years passed between the Buddha’s use of the Pali word saddha and the use of the modern English word “faith.” Therefore, retrofitting the concepts and meaning of the word Dhamma with the modern English word “faith” is wholly anachronistic.

Pali/English	Anachronism
<i>Uposatha</i> & Beliefs, Cultural Holidays, Traditions	<p>Equating the Pali word “uposatha” with the concepts of modern religious beliefs and cultural holidays is anachronistic because it applies a modern worldview and understanding of religion to a historical context of the Buddha’s time where such concepts did not exist.</p> <p>The Buddha did not teach a religion in the modern sense of the term, but rather a path to liberation through personal practice and experience. While there may be cultural traditions associated with the Dhamma, these do not equate in the same way to the modern concept of religion. Additionally, the inclusion of beliefs in these cultural practices does not necessarily make the Dhamma a religion, as beliefs may be an aspect of various cultural practices regardless of whether or not they are considered religious.</p> <p>The English word "holiday" has its origins in the Old English word "haligdaeg," which meant "holy day." This referred to a day of religious observance or celebration, such as Christmas or Easter. The</p>

	<p>first recorded religious use of the word "holiday" dates back to Old English in the Anglo-Saxon period, which began in the 5th century CE, which of course is hundreds of years after the Buddha. During this time, the Old English word "haligdaeg" was used to refer to religious holidays or holy days, such as Christmas, Easter, and All Saints' Day. These were days of religious observance or celebration that were set apart from ordinary days.</p> <p>Therefore, using the word religious meaning of the word holiday as proof that the practices associated with the teachings of the Buddha should be considered a religion in the modern worldview meaning is anachronistic.</p>
Pali/English	Anachronism
Tipitaka & Holy Scriptures	<p>The fundamental difference between the Dhamma recorded in the Tipitaka and the holy books of faith-based religions lies in their concept of the divine and their purpose. In faith-based religions, the holy books are believed to contain the infallible and divinely inspired word of a supernatural being or beings. The purpose of these holy books is to provide a roadmap to guide followers in their relationship with these supernatural entities, namely a devine God, as well as to outline beliefs, practices, and moral codes that are considered essential to attaining an afterlife with God. In the Tipitaka, on the other hand, the concept of the divine is not central. While there is the mention of beings, they are not considered to be the source of the Dhamma, nor are they to be worshiped. Instead, the Dhamma is considered to be the result of the Buddha's own experience and understanding of the nature of reality.</p> <p>The purpose of the Dhamma is to help practitioners understand the nature of suffering, its causes, and how to end it through the cultivation of wisdom and compassion. The ultimate goal is not to attain an afterlife relationship with God, but rather to achieve liberation from suffering and to attain the awakened state of enlightenment.</p> <p>In the conventional modern understanding, the holy books of faith-based religions are considered to be religious scriptures, but the fundamental difference lies between the concepts of the divine and their purpose. The holy books of faith-based religions are believed to contain the infallible and divinely inspired word of a supernatural being or beings and serve as a guide for followers to gain a relationship with the divine. Conversely, the Pali texts focus on understanding the nature of one's own suffering, its causes, and how to end it through the cultivation of wisdom and compassion in order to achieve liberation from suffering.</p> <p>For these reasons it would be anachronistic to equate the Dhamma recorded in the Tipitaka with the holy books of modern conventional faith-based religions in the same way. While the Pali texts important to the practitioner, the concept and the purpose of the Dhamma is fundamentally different compared to the holy</p>

scriptures of faith-based religions. The Buddha's teachings are considered to be the result of his own experience and understanding of the nature of reality, rather than being divinely inspired or revealed. The focus of the Dhamma is on understanding the nature of suffering, its causes, and how to end it through the cultivation of wisdom and compassion. The holy scriptures of faith-based religions do not provide instruction for gaining an understanding of the truth about the nature of reality.

While there may appear to be some similarities between the Pali texts and the holy books of other faith-based religions in terms of their status as religious scriptures, it is important to recognize the unique nature of the Dhamma and its purpose. The focus of the Dhamma is on the present life, and on understanding and addressing the root causes of suffering in this life. The ultimate goal of the Dhamma is to achieve liberation from suffering, which is something that can be directly experienced by an individual during their lifetime through the cultivation of wisdom and compassion.

The concept of rebirth is a fundamental worldview aspect of the Dhamma, it teaches that rebirth is a fundamental truth about the nature of reality. However, the emphasis on rebirth is not tied to a specific afterlife or to the idea of judgment or reward/punishment based on one's actions in this life. Furthermore, while the concept of rebirth cannot be directly experienced or proven in the same way as other aspects of the Dhamma, such as the Four Noble Truths, the focus of the Dhamma is still on understanding and addressing the root causes of suffering in this life, rather than on achieving a positive afterlife or avoiding a negative one.

In contrast to the holy scriptures of most faith-based religions, the end purpose outlined by the Dhamma can be directly experienced by an individual during their lifetime, rather than being something that can only be experienced after death. This is because the ultimate goal of the Dhamma is to achieve liberation from suffering and to attain the state of enlightenment or Nibbana, which is characterized by the end of suffering and the attainment of a state of peace and happiness that goes beyond the limitations of the physical body and mind, and can be experienced in this life.

Probably the most fundamental difference between the Dhamma recorded in the Pali texts and the holy scriptures of the faith-based religions is that the Dhamma presents no paradox in the same way that the holy scriptures do. The end purpose of the Dhamma teachings is to attain a mental or conscious awakening to the truth about the nature of reality. This requires that the person who becomes awakened is alive. The only way the end purpose can be experienced, according to what is recorded in the holy scriptures, is that the benefits of the afterlife can only be experienced or achieved after death, although there is no way to empirically prove it. In contrast to the holy scriptures of many faith-based religions, the end purpose outlined by the Dhamma can be directly experienced by an

	<p>individual during their lifetime, rather than being something that can only be experienced after death. This is because the ultimate goal of the Dhamma is to achieve liberation from suffering and to attain an awakened conscious mental state, which is characterized by the end of suffering and the attainment of a state of peace and happiness that goes beyond the limitations of the physical body and mind, which is experienced in this life.</p> <p>The current conceptual religious connotation of the word "scripture" traces back to the early Christian era, specifically to the 2nd century CE, which is 600 years after the Buddha's death. At this time, the term "scripture" began to be used to refer to texts that were considered authoritative of God and sacred to the Christian faith. These texts included the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, as well as other writings such as the Apocrypha. The concept of "scripture" as a source of religious authority and guidance became a central tenet of the Christian faith and was further developed and codified in subsequent centuries. Imposing a 600-year-old concept onto the earlier teachings of the Buddha is clearly anachronistic.</p>
Pali/English	Anachronism
Dhamma & Religious Philosophy	<p>An anachronism is created by the attempt to equate the philosophy of the Dhamma with the philosophy of modern faith-based religions. Religious philosophy is known as "Theology."</p> <p>The word theology comes from the Greek words "theos," meaning "god," and "logos," meaning "word" or "reason." The term "theology" can be broadly defined as the study of the nature of God or the divine, and of religious beliefs and practices. In this sense, <i>theology is concerned with exploring questions such as the existence and nature of God</i>, the relationship between God and the world, the nature of religious experience, and the meaning and significance of religious beliefs and practices. Theology can involve philosophical, historical, and exegetical approaches, and is often undertaken within the context of a particular religious tradition or community.</p> <p>Theology can be divided into various sub-disciplines, such as systematic theology, which seeks to organize and articulate the fundamental beliefs of a particular religious tradition, and practical theology, which explores the application of theological insights to practical issues of everyday life. <i>Overall, theology seeks to deepen our understanding of the divine</i> and to explore the ways in which our understanding of the divine shapes our lives and the world around us.</p> <p>Buddha developed his understanding of the Dhamma in an entirely different cultural and historical context than modern faith-based religion, and the concepts and ideas presented in the Dhamma do not align with the concepts and ideas presented in theological religions.</p>

One basis for an anachronism between Dhamma philosophy and Theological philosophy is the fact that the Dhamma has no connection to an all supreme supernaturally entity. The Buddha's teachings were developed in ancient India, at a time when the religious and philosophical landscape was very different than it is today. The ideas and teachings presented by the Buddha reflect this cultural and historical context, and may not be directly comparable to the concepts and ideas presented in modern faith-based religions.

Furthermore, the Dhamma is not centered around the concept of a divine being or beings, which is a central tenet of many modern faith-based religions. Instead, the focus of the Dhamma is on understanding the nature of suffering and how to end it through the cultivation of wisdom and compassion.

While there may be some similarities between the philosophy of the Dhamma and the philosophy of modern faith-based religions, it is important to recognize the unique nature of the Dhamma and its historical and cultural context. Attempting to equate the two philosophies without considering these differences can lead to misunderstandings and inaccuracies.

The Dhamma includes teachings on the nature of reality, the attainment of the mental development of awakening, and the cultivation of moral and ethical principles. It also includes practices such as meditation and the study of the Buddha's teachings, which are not holy texts in the same sense as those of faith-based religious texts, because the purposes between the two are fundamentally opposite. The Dhamma also teaches the importance of the Sangha communities, which are mainly locally organized for the purpose of attaining the end goal of ending suffering and attaining a conscious awakening to the truth about the nature of reality. The Dhamma does not teach anything about institutions in the sense of religious institutions.

APPENDIX

1. Notable Pali Translators from the 20th and 21st centuries:

- **I.B. Horner** (1896-1981): Horner was a British scholar who was one of the first Westerners to become proficient in Pali. She translated many Pali texts, including the Vinaya Pitaka and the Anguttara Nikaya, and also wrote a biography of the Buddha.
- **Nyanaponika Thera** (1901-1994): Nyanaponika was a German-born monk who translated many important Pali texts, including the Visuddhimagga and the Dhammasangani. He also wrote extensively on topics such as meditation and the nature of consciousness.
- **Bhikkhu Bodhi** (1944-): Bodhi is an American monk and scholar who has translated many important Pali texts, including the Majjhima Nikaya, the Samyutta Nikaya, and the Anguttara Nikaya. He has also written extensively on Dhamma philosophy and ethics.
- **Ven. Ñāṇamoli Thera** (1905-1960): Ñāṇamoli was a British monk who translated many important Pali texts, including the Visuddhimagga and the Majjhima Nikaya. He was also known for his clear and accessible writing style.
- **Thanissaro Bhikkhu** (1949-): Thanissaro is an American monk who has translated many important Pali texts, including the Digha Nikaya and the Sutta Nipata. He is known for his precise and faithful translations, as well as his commentaries on Pali texts.
- **Steven Collins** (1951-): Collins is a British scholar who has translated several Pali texts, including the Visuddhimagga and the Pali text of the Therigatha. He has also written extensively on Pali language and literature and the history of the Dhamma.
- **Bhikkhu Anālayo** (1962-): Anālayo is a German monk and scholar who has made significant contributions to the study of early Buddhist texts, including those written in Pali. He has written numerous books and articles on topics such as mindfulness meditation, early Buddhist philosophy, and the history of Buddhist meditation practices.
- **Ven. Yifa** (1952-): Yifa is a Taiwanese nun and scholar who has written extensively on Buddhist philosophy, including Pali texts. She is known for her translations of early Buddhist texts and her work on topics such as the nature of consciousness and the development of Buddhist ethics.

- **Jinadasa Liyanaratne** (1953-): Liyanaratne is a Sri Lankan scholar who has written on various aspects of Buddhist philosophy and Pali language and literature. He has published numerous translations and commentaries on Pali texts and has also written on topics such as the role of the Buddha's teachings in contemporary society.
- **Rupert Gethin** (1957-): Gethin is a British scholar who has written extensively on the early Buddhist tradition, including Pali language and literature. He has published many translations and commentaries on Pali texts and has also written on topics such as the nature of Buddhist ethics and the relationship between Buddhism and science.
- **Peter Masefield** (1924-2006): A British scholar who was a specialist in Pali language and literature. He translated many Pali texts and also wrote on topics such as early Buddhist philosophy and the development of Buddhist doctrine.
- **K.N. Jayatilleke** (1920-1970): A Sri Lankan philosopher and scholar who wrote extensively on Buddhist philosophy and logic. His works include studies of Pali texts and commentaries, as well as original contributions to the field of Buddhist philosophy.
- **Kenneth Roy Norman** (1925-2011): A British scholar who made significant contributions to the study of Pali language and literature. He translated many Pali texts and also wrote on topics such as the history of Buddhism and the development of Buddhist doctrine.
- **Richard Gombrich** (1937-): Gombrich is a British scholar who has made significant contributions to the study of early Buddhist literature and philosophy, including Pali texts. He is known for his work on the concept of "emptiness" in Buddhism and for his translations and commentaries on Pali texts.
- **Anagarika Dharmapala** (1864-1933): Dharmapala was a Sri Lankan Buddhist revivalist who played a key role in promoting the study and preservation of Pali texts. He founded the Maha Bodhi Society and was involved in many initiatives to promote Buddhism in India and other parts of the world.
- **S.N. Goenka** (1924-2013): Goenka was an Indian meditation teacher who popularized Vipassana meditation, a technique that is based on Pali texts. He founded many Vipassana meditation centers around the world and was involved in efforts to promote the study and practice of Buddhism.
- **Thomas William Rhys Davids** (1843-1922) was a British scholar who was instrumental in the study of Buddhism and Pali literature. He is considered one of the pioneers of Buddhist studies in the West and was the founder and first president of the Pali Text Society, which was dedicated to the preservation and translation of the Buddhist scriptures in Pali.

Rhys Davids was educated at Oxford and began his career as a teacher before becoming interested in Buddhism and Pali literature. He was appointed Professor of Comparative Religion at the University of Manchester in 1904, and later became Professor of Pali and Buddhist Literature at the School of Oriental Studies in London.

Rhys Davids made significant contributions to the study of Buddhism, including translations of Pali texts and critical analyses of Buddhist doctrine. He was also instrumental in the founding of the Buddhist Society in London, which was dedicated to the study and practice of Buddhism in the West.

Rhys Davids was recognized for his contributions to the study of Buddhism and was awarded numerous honors throughout his life, including the title of Knight Commander of the Order of the Indian Empire in 1905. His work has had a lasting impact on the field of Buddhist studies and remains influential to this day.

2. Alagaddupama Sutta (Majjhima Nikaya 22):

- The importance of discernment: The sutta begins with the Buddha telling his disciples that they should be discerning in their judgment of his teachings, just as a goldsmith tests gold to separate it from other metals.
- The danger of clinging to views: The Buddha explains that clinging to views is like getting caught by a snake, which can cause suffering and harm. He emphasizes the importance of seeing things as they really are, without clinging to fixed views or beliefs.
- The importance of skillful speech: The Buddha explains that skillful speech is important for spiritual development, as it helps to avoid causing harm to oneself and others. He gives examples of unskillful speech, such as lying, harsh speech, and gossip, and explains the benefits of skillful speech, such as promoting harmony and trust.
- The importance of non-attachment: The Buddha explains that non-attachment is essential for spiritual progress, as it helps to overcome craving and clinging to the world. He gives examples of attachment to sense pleasures, views, and conceit, and explains how they can lead to suffering.
- The importance of cultivating virtue, concentration, and wisdom: The Buddha explains that cultivating virtue, concentration, and wisdom are essential for spiritual development and ultimate liberation. He gives instructions on how to develop each of these qualities and how they support each other.

3. Dhammapadda 141-142

Verse 141:

"Without knowledge there is no meditation,

Without meditation there is no knowledge:

He who has knowledge and meditation is near unto Nirvana."

Verse 142:

"A wise man, persevering in meditation,
Knows the uncreated,
The supreme state of bliss
Which transcends the senses and the mind."

These teachings emphasize the importance of knowledge and meditation in the Buddhist path towards liberation.

Verse 141 explains that knowledge and meditation are interdependent and complement each other. In Buddhism, knowledge refers to understanding the nature of reality and the Four Noble Truths, while meditation refers to the cultivation of mindfulness and concentration through various practices. The verse suggests that without knowledge, one cannot engage in effective meditation, and without meditation, one cannot develop the necessary knowledge.

Verse 142 highlights the benefits of persevering in meditation. The wise person who cultivates meditation can experience the uncreated or the supreme state of bliss, which goes beyond the limitations of the senses and the mind. This state is often referred to as Nirvana, the ultimate goal of the Buddhist path.

Overall, these verses emphasize the importance of combining knowledge and meditation in the pursuit of spiritual growth and liberation. They also emphasize the importance of perseverance and the potential for profound spiritual experiences through meditation practice.

4. Cula-Saccaka Sutta:

The Cula-Saccaka Sutta, also known as the "Shorter Discourse with Saccaka," is a discourse given by the Buddha in the Majjhima Nikaya (Middle Length Discourses). The main teachings contained in this sutta include:

- The importance of personal experience: The sutta begins with Saccaka, a Brahmin philosopher, challenging the Buddha's teachings. The Buddha emphasizes the importance of personal experience in determining the truth, rather than relying on mere intellectual arguments or authority.
- The nature of suffering: The Buddha explains the nature of suffering and its causes, emphasizing the role of craving and ignorance in perpetuating the cycle of birth and death.
- The Four Noble Truths: The Buddha explains the Four Noble Truths, which form the foundation of Buddhist teachings. These truths are the truth of suffering, the truth of the cause of suffering, the truth of the cessation of suffering, and the truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering.
- The importance of the Eightfold Path: The Buddha emphasizes the importance of the Eightfold Path, which consists of right view, right intention, right speech, right

action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. He explains how each aspect of the path supports the others in the pursuit of spiritual development and liberation.

- The ultimate goal of spiritual practice: The Buddha explains that the ultimate goal of spiritual practice is the attainment of Nirvana, the state of liberation from suffering and rebirth.

Overall, the Cula-Saccaka Sutta emphasizes the importance of personal experience, the nature of suffering, the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, and the ultimate goal of spiritual practice in the Buddhist path towards liberation.

5. **Gati:** In many English translations, the Pāli word “gati” is mistranslated as “destination.” But the correct translation is “habits/character” as explained in detail in the links in #1 and also at #8 below. We can also see that in other suttā, for example, in the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta (DN 16.) (Pure Dhamma <https://puredhamma.net/paticca-samuppada/kamma-and-paticca-samuppada/gati-determine-births/?highlight=gati>)

6. **Mahasangika Sect:**

The Mahasangika did not have a fixed canon of scriptures like the Theravada. They believed that the Buddha's teachings were constantly evolving and that new texts and interpretations could be added to the existing canon. The emphasis in the Mahasangika was on lay practice and the idea that enlightenment was attainable by all, not just monks. They encouraged lay followers to practice generosity, ethical conduct, and meditation in order to attain spiritual development. The Mahasangika sect eventually gave rise to the Mahayana form of Buddhism, which emphasized the importance of bodhisattva ideals and the idea of the Buddha-nature, or the potential for enlightenment that exists within all beings. Overall, the Mahasangika sect represented a shift away from monasticism and emphasis on textual authority of the early Pali texts towards a more inclusive and dynamic understanding of the Buddha's teachings.

Like the the Mahasangika sect, the Mahayana doctrines developed several hundred years after the Buddha, do not completely align with what is recorded in the Pali texts, and there are several reasons for this. Firstly, like the Mahasangika sect, the Mahayana emerged several centuries after the Buddha's death and after the composition of the Pali texts. As a result, the Mahayana developed its own distinct doctrines and practices that were influenced by a variety of cultural, social, and philosophical factors. Secondly, the Mahayana texts were composed in a different language (Sanskrit) and in a different cultural context than the original Pali texts of the Buddha's time. As a result, the Mahayana texts contain different terminology, concepts, and practices that reflect the cultural milieu in which they were composed. Finally, the Mahayana expanded the teachings of the Buddha that went beyond the early emphasis on individual liberation. Mahayana texts emphasize the importance of compassion and the bodhisattva ideal, the idea that all beings have the potential for enlightenment, and the importance of skillful means in helping others on the path to liberation. While some of these ideas can be found in the Pali texts, they are not emphasized to the same degree as they are in the Mahayana.

The Mahasangika sect existed in India during the early centuries of the Common Era, roughly from the 3rd century BCE to the 1st century CE. It was one of the most widespread and influential sects of the time, with a significant presence in several regions of India. While the Mahasangika sect eventually declined and was absorbed into other forms of Buddhism, most notably the Mahayana form of Buddhism, it had a lasting impact on the development of Buddhist thought and practice in India and beyond.

7. Doctrine of Analysis (Vibhajjavada):

The Doctrine of Analysis, also known as the Abhidhamma, is a key component of the Buddhist teachings found in the Pali texts. It is a systematic and detailed analysis of the Buddha's teachings, providing a theoretical framework for understanding the nature of reality and the workings of the mind.

The Pali words "abhidhamma" and "Vibhajjavada" are related in that they both refer to the systematic and analytical approach to the Buddha's teachings that is characteristic of the Theravada tradition. "Abhidhamma" is a Pali term that means "higher teachings" or "more subtle teachings," and refers to the third section of the Pali Canon, which contains systematic and analytical treatises on the nature of reality and the workings of the mind. "Vibhajjavada" is another Pali term that is often used to refer to the Theravada tradition of Buddhism, which upholds the doctrine of analysis and emphasizes the importance of independent inquiry and understanding based on one's own experience. "Vibhajjavada" can be translated as "the teaching of analysis" or "the doctrine of discrimination." So, while "abhidhamma" refers specifically to the texts that contain analytical treatises in the Pali Canon, "Vibhajjavada" refers more broadly to the analytical approach to the Buddha's teachings that characterizes the Theravada tradition.

The main concept behind the Doctrine of Analysis is that all phenomena can be analyzed and understood in terms of their constituent parts. The Abhidhamma breaks down reality into its smallest components, known as dharmas, which are categorized into different groups based on their characteristics and functions. These dharmas include physical elements, mental factors, and causal relationships between them.

The Doctrine of Analysis also emphasizes the importance of understanding the impermanent, unsatisfactory, and selfless nature of all phenomena. It provides detailed descriptions of the nature of consciousness, mental states, and the causal relationships between them, in order to help practitioners to gain insight into the true nature of reality. Overall, the Doctrine of Analysis represents an attempt to systematize and analyze the Buddha's teachings in a comprehensive and rigorous manner. It provides a detailed theoretical framework for understanding the nature of reality and the workings of the mind, and serves as a foundation for further study and practice in the Buddhist path towards liberation.

8. Pali Canon v. Mahayana Canon:

The Mahayana Canon, also known as the Mahayana Tripitaka, was compiled and written down over a period of several centuries, beginning around the 1st century CE and continuing through the 5th or 6th century CE. The texts of the Mahayana Canon were originally composed in Sanskrit and were later translated into various other languages, including Chinese and Tibetan. The Mahayana Canon includes a wide range of texts, including sutras, commentaries, and treatises that were composed by a variety of authors

over a long period of time. The exact dating and authorship of many of these texts are difficult to determine due to the complex history of their composition, transmission, and translation.

Many of the texts in the Mahayana Canon were composed centuries after the Buddha's lifetime, and reflect the influence of later philosophical and cultural developments in India and other parts of Asia. Some of the concepts and practices emphasized in the Mahayana Canon, such as the bodhisattva ideal and the doctrine of Buddha-nature, are not found in the earliest Pali Canon nor were the concepts espoused in the Mahayana Canon ever taught by the Buddha.

The Pali Canon is the oldest collection of texts that has survived intact, and it contains the most comprehensive record of the teachings of the historical Buddha as they were understood and transmitted by his early followers. The Pali Canon is also written in Pali, which was a vernacular language spoken in ancient India, and it represents the earliest surviving body of literature in this language. The Pali Canon provides valuable insights into the language, culture, and social context of ancient India.

The Pali Canon forms the basis for the Theravada tradition of Buddhism, which is the oldest surviving school and represents the most direct lineage of the Buddha's teachings. The Pali Canon serves as the authoritative source for the doctrines, practices, and monastic rules of the Theravada tradition.

Theravada is the oldest surviving school of Buddhism and has its roots in the early Buddhist teachings as recorded in the Pali Canon. The history of Theravada can be traced back to the time of the Buddha, who lived in ancient India during the 5th century BCE. After the Buddha's death, his teachings were passed down orally by his followers for several centuries before they were eventually written down in the Pali Canon. The Pali Canon formed the basis for the Theravada tradition, which was established in Sri Lanka and other parts of Southeast Asia. Both the Theravada school and the Pali Tipitaka are the closest to the historical Buddha.

The early history of Theravada is closely intertwined with the history of Sri Lanka, which played a key role in preserving and transmitting the teachings of the Buddha. The Sri Lankan monk Mahinda, who was the son of the Mauryan emperor Ashoka, is credited with introducing the Dhamma teachings to Sri Lanka in the 3rd century BCE (300 BCE). The Buddha died roughly 100 years before this. Over the centuries, Sri Lanka became a center of Dhamma learning and scholarship, and many important texts and commentaries were written there. Theravada spread to other parts of Southeast Asia, including Burma (Myanmar), Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia, where it became the dominant form of Buddhism. In these countries, Theravada monks played a key role in preserving the teachings of the Buddha and in promoting Dhamma education and practice.

Throughout its history, Theravada has faced challenges and periods of decline, but it has also experienced periods of renewal and growth. In the modern era, Theravada has experienced a resurgence of interest and popularity, both in its traditional homelands and in other parts of the world. Today, Theravada remains a vibrant and dynamic tradition, with millions of followers around the world. It continues to be a rich source of inspiration and guidance for those seeking to understand and practice the Dhamma in the modern era.

9. Loka:

- **Literal meaning:** The literal meaning of "loka" is "that which is seen," or "that which is visible." In this sense, "loka" refers to the physical world or universe that can be observed with the senses.
- **Cosmological meaning:** In the Pali texts, "loka" is often used in a cosmological sense to refer to the entire universe, including all the different realms of existence, from the lowest hells to the highest heavens. In this context, "loka" is often used in conjunction with the term "bhava," which refers to the process of becoming or rebirth.
- **Psychological meaning:** In addition to its cosmological meaning, "loka" is also used in a psychological sense to refer to the world of experience that arises from the senses and the mind. In this sense, "loka" refers to the subjective world of perception and experience that each individual inhabits.
- **Ethical meaning:** "Loka" is also used in an ethical sense to refer to the realm of moral and ethical behavior, or to the principles of right and wrong that govern human behavior. In this sense, "loka" can refer to the world of ordinary human existence, which is characterized by suffering and the cycle of birth and death.
- **Metaphysical meaning:** In some texts, "loka" is used in a metaphysical sense to refer to the ultimate nature of reality or the nature of the Absolute. In this sense, "loka" can refer to the ultimate goal of spiritual practice, which is to transcend the limitations of the ordinary world and to attain enlightenment or liberation.

10. Sabhava:

The Pali word "sabhāva" is a compound word consisting of "sa" and "bhāva." "Sa" means "together," and "bhāva" means "being" or "existence." Together, "sabhāva" can be translated as "co-existence" or "mutual being."

In the Pali texts, "sabhāva" is used to refer to the intrinsic nature or essence of things, including both material and mental phenomena. It refers to the inherent characteristics or qualities that make things what they are.

The concept of "sabhāva" is closely related to the idea of dependent origination, which is one of the key doctrines of Buddhism. According to dependent origination, all phenomena arise in dependence upon other phenomena, and there is no independent or self-existent entity or essence that underlies them. The concept of "sabhāva" helps to explain how phenomena can arise and exist in dependence upon other phenomena, while still maintaining their own unique characteristics and qualities.

In addition to its philosophical and metaphysical connotations, the concept of "sabhāva" has important ethical and psychological implications. Understanding the intrinsic nature of things can help to develop wisdom and insight, and can help to overcome ignorance and delusion. It can also help to cultivate a deeper appreciation of the interconnectedness and interdependence of all things, which is a central theme of Dhamma philosophy and practice.

11. Puthujjana:

The Pali word "puthujjana" refers to an ordinary, unenlightened person who has not yet realized the ultimate truth of Buddhism. The term is often translated as "worldly person," "ordinary person," or "unenlightened person."

In the context of the Dhamma teachings, the term "puthujjana" is used to distinguish between those who have not yet realized the ultimate truth of the Four Noble Truths, and those who have attained at least some degree of spiritual insight or realization. The puthujjana is seen as being trapped in the cycle of birth and death (samsara) and subject to the three unwholesome roots of greed, hatred, and delusion, which are the primary sources of suffering.

The term "puthujjana" is used in contrast to the term "ariya," which refers to one who has attained some degree of spiritual realization or insight. The ariya is seen as having transcended the limitations of the ordinary, unenlightened state, and as having gained a deeper understanding of the nature of reality and the path to liberation from suffering.

In Dhamma practice, the goal is to move from the state of the puthujjana to that of the ariya, by developing wisdom, cultivating wholesome states of mind, and following the Eightfold Path. The term "puthujjana" serves as a reminder of the limitations of ordinary, unenlightened existence, and as a motivation to pursue the path of spiritual practice and realization. Suffice-it-to-say, it would be correct to say that a lay person who is learning the Dhamma is a puthujjana. In actuality, anyone who has not attained even a cursory understanding of the Dhamma is a puthujjana.

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